

SKETCHES

OF

MODERN LIFE;

OR,

MAN AS HE OUGHT NOT TO BE.

A *Nobel*.

IN TWO VOLUMES:

VOL. II.

—Romane caveto!

These shall the fury Passions tear,
The vultures of the mind!
Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
And Shame, that skulks behind—
Or pining Love shall waste their youth,
Or Jealousy, with rankling tooth,
That inly gnaws the secret heart,
And Envy wan, and faded Care,
Grim-visag'd, comfortless Despair,
And Sorrow's piercing dart. GRAY.

London:

PRINTED FOR W. MILLER, OLD BOND STREET.

1799.

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THE BRITISH MUSEUM

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SKETCHES
OF
MODERN LIFE,

&c. &c.

CHAP. I.

THREE days having elapsed, Hartlebury, who, during that time, had not called in Bond Street, made his appearance, at ten o'clock. After congratulating Forester on his recovery—

“ I hope I bring you good news,” said he; “ I have seen Lord Arrowsworth. We had much conversation about you; but as ancestral pride is his foible, I concealed the

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story of your birth, and merely said, that you were of a decent family in the west of England. His Lordship is at present in need of an amanuensis, and I thought you extremely well adapted to the office. I see your surprise; but let me explain my motive."

He then declared, that, in his opinion, Creswell's promises and a coquet's integrity were upon a par. He was certain, from his late behaviour, that he could have no wish of seeing him settled in life. He then expatiated on the advantages likely to arise from an introduction to the family of Lord Arrowsworth; painted the character of that nobleman in bold and glowing colors, and finally observed, that Forester was not to look upon himself as a dependant but as a friend; and, whenever Creswell chose to make good his promises, no imputation of ingratitude could be incurred, were he to leave the house of Lord Arrowsworth. He however advised him to keep the whole transaction a secret from
Cres-

Creswell, who would, doubtless, strain every nerve to injure him: for this purpose it would be necessary to retain his lodgings in Bond Street. Forester expressed his willingness to accede to any proposal made by so disinterested a friend, and began to express the gratitude he felt.

"We will talk of thanks," said Hartlebury, "when you are settled to your satisfaction; but at present, you may thank your good genius, who has tuned the heart of Lord Arrowsworth to the most harmonious pitch. After having buried several infant sons, and given over all hopes of an heir, Lady Arrowsworth, after more than twenty years marriage, has declared herself again pregnant. His Lordship is in raptures, which are only allayed by a fear of the wreck of his hope: his anxious concern will hardly permit her to walk across a room, lest too much exercise be prejudicial; or sit still, lest inaction have the same effect. Above all, the poor woman must not approach the window, for fear of being

shocked by a funeral, or the rencontres of pugilists. My fear is, that he will teize her to death; for, to confess the truth, her Ladyship, though sure of a son, as if already born, is not of a temper to bear confinement. Her parties are numerous and fashionable; and though she does not herself plunge into the modish vice of gaming, the whole town flock to the house of Lady Arrowsworth."

The gentlemen then walked towards St. James's Square. His Lordship received them in his library. Forester was delighted at the idea of passing his time so much to his taste; and after an hour's conversation, took leave, in order to dismiss his servant, and send his effects to his new residence. He charged the people of the house to bring all letters directly to St. James's Square, and not to hint at his having left the lodgings, which he should still consider as his own. He then called upon the Apsleys, informed them of his good fortune, and mentioned that Hartlebury would, with pleasure,

pleasure, introduce them to his Lordship. He then returned to St. James's Square.

Lord Arrowsworth was every thing, and more than Hartlebury had described him. The pride of birth, indeed, would sometimes betray itself; but it was to advance his own consequence, not to hurt the feelings of another. The idea of an amanuensis was merely mentioned, that Forester might not think himself degraded to the situation of a humble friend. The mornings were spent in the library, where the strong sense of Lord Arrowsworth, cultivated by a refined education, was a source of knowledge to his protégé; and by the assistance of his patron, Forester was soon enabled to taste the beauties of Dante, or rove with delight through the enchanted bowers of Armida. The evenings were, indeed, devoted to less rational amusement. Lady Arrowsworth, a prisoner in her own house, was resolved to lighten the burden of her captivity by every means in her power: continual rounds of company

amused

amused her; and the congratulations she received from particular friends, tended to raise her consequence, and render confinement tolerable.

One morning, while Lord Arrowsworth and Forester were contending about the legitimacy of one of the odes ascribed to Anacreon, a note was delivered to the latter :

“ SIR,

“ I RITE by the desire of Mrs. Tommus, who is verry ill abed with the rumatise. She begs her kind duty to you, and says that she has nott been abel to work these two munths. She hopes you will be so kinde as to stand her frend, for she has nun in the wurd but yourselph.

“ I am, sir,

“ Your dewtiful servant to commande,

“ HANNAH PRICE.

“ Duke Street, Westminster.”

Forester now recollected, with concern, that his neglect of Mrs. Thomas had probably

bably reduced her to great inconvenience. Lord Arrowsworth remarked the change of his countenance, and half laughing, said he hoped it was no disappointment in love. Forester answered, by putting the letter into his hands, and announced his intention of flying to her relief. Lord Arrowsworth inquired who the poor woman was; and being informed by Forester that she was an old servant of his mother's, by unforeseen calamity reduced to distress, warmly applauded his humanity, and insisted, as the weather was bad, that he should make use of the chariot. When Forester reached Duke Street, he was shocked at the wretched figure of his poor dependent: she was yet able to crawl from place to place; but her hands were contracted in so terrible a manner, that it was utterly impossible for her to assist herself in dressing, much less to work at her needle. The poor creature made many apologies for being so troublesome to his goodness, but hoped that he would forgive her, as she had not applied to him

till all other resource had failed. "My life, my dear sir," said she, "is a burden: I would willingly, if God pleased, lay it down; but I sometimes think that if you were once well settled in the world, I should (if you permitted) end my days in your family with more comfort, than in a lodging, where there is nobody to whom I am particularly attached. Make me happy then, sir, by promising, if ever it be in your power, that I shall live and die under your roof. I received you when you first came into the world, and I feel I love you more than I yet ever loved any body."

Forester gave her the demanded promise, and then asked if she had heard any more of his father? To this she replied in the negative, not forgetting to rail at her attendant for her carelessness. After some time, Forester took leave, having relieved her as far as his finances would permit, and proceeded to Clifford Street, enjoying that tranquil flow of spirits which the consciousness of a good action never fails to inspire.

Cuthbert

Cuthbert was seated in an arm-chair: his head rested upon his hand, and his appearance indicated that internal wretchedness which flies from the voice of comfort, and, wrapped wholly in itself, is indifferent to the common affairs of life.

Sinclair was twirling a whip-lash.

Upon entering the room, Forester immediately took the hand of Cuthbert, but started when he felt the burning heat of his skin. His eyes were hollow; a lively red died his cheeks; and his respiration was short and quick.

“Good God,” cried Forester, “what is the meaning of this? Am I to suppose that you let the coquetry of a worthless woman prey upon your mind, and destroy your health?”

Cuthbert endeavoured to smile. “I am very well,” said he, in a hurried voice; “I am vexed—I mean surprised, that you should think otherwise. Have you dined?”

“It is but three o’clock!”

“True, true—what was I saying? how ridiculous!”

ridiculous! I am sorry that I could not call in Bond Street yesterday."

"You know, Cuthbert, that I now reside at Lord Arrowsworth's."

"Where?"

This interrogatory was uttered with such a look of vacancy, that Forester, terrified, rung the bell, and ordered a servant to run with all possible speed to Dr. Elton. Sinclair, however, declared he would be the messenger, and quick as lightning darted out of the room.

Cuthbert now slowly arose. "I am, indeed, not very well.—I believe so. Will you take a glass of wine?" and walking to the sideboard, he poured a rummer half full.

"Willingly," said Forester, wishing to prevent him from doing the same; and as he approached the sideboard, pretending to stumble, he threw the decanter upon the floor. At the same time, raising the glass to his lips, he perceived that what he had taken for white wine, was strong French brandy.

brandy. Shocked at the idea, that Cuthbert, either by design or mistake, should thus ruin his health, he turned towards him, looked earnestly in his face, then solemnly addressing him—"Cuthbert," said he, "are you aware, while you give way to the impulse of passion, how far you afflict your friend, degrade yourself, and destroy your father?"

"My father!" said Cuthbert, faintly: "I have no father: he has, doubtless, renounced me; and I know how unworthy I am of such a parent; but what are friends? what are the ties of nature? where is their obligation? what are the most sacred considerations, when the glance of a woman can, in a moment, dissolve their influence?"

"Your father has not forsaken you, dear Cuthbert: he knows not your errors; and, did he even know them, his anger would melt at the sight of your repentance. But have I felt no pangs attached to love? have I not, like you, felt for the same object? I now curse the delusion, and spurn

the charm. Awake then, Cuthbert, from this temporary weakness; let love be superseded by contempt; consider the gross vices of the creature you admire; forget her personal charms, and fix your thoughts on the blackness of her heart."

"It cannot be; it cannot be: you injure her: she is, indeed, faulty, but I alone am licensed to upbraid her."

Cuthbert now flung himself upon the sofa, and talked in so incoherent a manner, that Forester was fearful lest his frenzy might transport him to the most fatal extremities. He dismissed the chariot with a note to Lord Arrowsworth, summoned the footman, and awaited the coming of Dr. Elton with impatience. The worthy man soon appeared, followed by Sinclair, who instantly taking up his whip-lash, busied himself as sedulously in tying knots, as if his whole dependence in life were on his industry. The physician immediately declared his patient in a high fever, and ordered him to be instantly taken to bed. Sinclair sat still; and
when

when Dr. Elton returned to the parlour with Forester, he was still employed with his whip-lash. "Your brother is quiet now, sir," said the doctor; "I hope he will do well; he must not be disturbed, and it would be proper to send for a careful nurse."

"What a cursed obstinate knot!" muttered Sinclair, while he pulled with all his might—"What infernal whipcord!"

"Really, sir," said Dr. Elton warmly, "I am astonished at your apathy—were he even a stranger, common decency would at least require some seeming attention."

Sinclair looked up; his eyes were filled with tears, and his face showed that they had flowed in a plentiful stream. "Look'e, doctor," sobbed he, "you see this new whip-lash; willingly would I wear it out on my own ribs, could but that penance restore my poor brother to health, for it was all owing to my folly that he came to this unlucky town. I was ashamed to show that I could not command my tears, and therefore pretended to be busy; but for sus-
pecting

pecting that one brother could unmoved behold the agonies of another, agonies of which he was the cause, I'll be cursed if you don't deserve a horfewhipping yourself." He then resumed his occupation.

Dr. Elton was thunderstruck ; he made every apology for his vehemence ; bade Sinclair hope the best, and assured him that he apprehended his patient to be in no danger whatsoever. The tide of joy flowing so unexpectedly, almost overwhelmed the faculties of the affectionate youth ; he laughed and wept, shook the doctor by the hand, and kicked the chairs about the room ; nor was it till informed that by so doing he would disturb his brother, that he was reduced to act like a reasonable being. Dinner was announced, and the physician with some difficulty was persuaded to partake of the meal. Sinclair, in the joy of his heart, paid his devotions to the bottle, which, in a short time, produced a soporific effect, and Forester was conveyed to St. James's Square in the chariot of Dr. Elton.

Elton. A large party were assembled to dinner; and Forester, being en dishabille, retired to his own apartment, where, for the amusement of his patron, he paraphrased the ode of Anacreon which had been the subject of their morning's conversation.

As late, of sweetest flowrets made,
A garland for my fair I wove;
Beneath a rose supinely laid
I spied, asleep, the god of love.

Elated with imprudent joy,
Resolving vengeance to obtain,
I seiz'd the unsuspecting boy,
Who struggled to escape in vain.

No longer, tyrant, shall thy pow'r
Deprive me of my rest, I cried;
Thy reign is o'er; the present hour
Shall terminate thy faucy pride.

This said, with eager haste my prize
I bore to where a goblet stood,
And, deaf to all his piercing cries,
Immers'd him in the mantling flood.

Then to my lips the bowl I prest,
"Resolv'd to have a draught divine;"
And deep within my glowing breast
Imbib'd the captive and the wine.

But

But while I thus a dang'rous foe
Consign'd relentless to his fate,
I little knew what hours of woe
My daring rashness would create.

For, ever since within my heart
The little god despotic reigns ;
There, undisturb'd, he plies his dart,
And scatters poison through my veins.

Forester thought on Cuthbert, sigh'd,
and retired to rest.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Self-love thus push'd to social, to divine,
Gives thee to make thy neighbour's blessing thine.
Is this too little for thy boundless heart ?
Extend it—let thy enemies have part :
Grasp the whole worlds of reason, life, and sense,
In one close system of benevolence.
Happier as kinder in whate'er degree
And height of bliss, but height of charity. POPE.

ALTHOUGH the mornings were devoted to study, the evenings owned the influence of folly ; for Lady Arrowsworth, proud of confinement that added to her consequence, admitted the whole fashionable world. Forester, whose disposition, though it led him to taste the pleasures of society, shunned the tumultuous glare of dissipation, passed most of his evenings in discharging the duties of friendship. Cuthbert was sensible of his attention, and after some time was enabled to quit his room ; a
pro-

profound melancholy, nevertheless, continued to prey upon him, and undermine his constitution. Dr. Elton, hoping that a change of scene might effect a change in the feelings of his patient, recommended the air of Bristol; and shortly after the Apsleys took leave of their friend, and set off for Somersetshire.

One morning as Forester was sitting in his chamber, expecting the summons to breakfast, he was surprised by a message from Lady Arrowsworth, requesting the favour of his company in her dressing-room. He immediately obeyed her orders, and found her engaged in an amicable contest with his Lordship. Different cases of jewels were scattered over the breakfast-table, and when Forester entered the room her Ladyship exclaimed, "Come here, my good friend, you always take my part; we want you to settle a knotty point—a family quarrel: my Lord wants to ruin himself in diamonds; I am not in need of any: I have no objection to take this necklace,
but

but what have I to do with ear-rings or bracelets, when I have already more than are necessary?"

Forester begged to decline interfering, as perhaps her Ladyship might find him, for the first time, of a contrary opinion to hers. The contest was firmly kept up for some time, but Lord Arrowsworth gained a complete victory; yet, as her Ladyship objected to the setting of the ear-rings, they were to be returned to the jeweller for alteration. As Forester was going out, he offered himself to be the bearer: this proposal was graciously received by Lady Arrowsworth, who cautioned him as she gave the case not to be a Belcour, and give away her jewels for the glance of a fine pair of eyes. He promised he would not, and, desirous to see his protégée, hastened to Westminster, forgetting to leave his charge at the jeweller's by the way. The poor woman was rapidly and perceptibly declining, yet her eyes brightened when she beheld her preserver. She lamented that
no

no provision was made for him, and desiccated so much upon the subject, that in order to enliven her spirits he assumed a gay air, and assured her, that if he had no provision in life, he had good credit among the jewellers: he then produced the case. Mrs. Thomas took it, screamed with surprise, and exclaimed, "Yes, yes, they are the same—on my soul the very same—how does wickedness come to light!"

Forester, alarmed, inquired her meaning.

"They are the same, and I shall have my character cleared, sir, as I hope for salvation—they are the very ear-rings I was accused of stealing."

Forester begged her to be very sure of what she said; but Mrs. Thomas declared, that she had put them on Miss Burgefs so often, that she could describe every diamond. She accordingly gave him the case, and so accurate was her description, that no doubt remained on his mind. He blessed the happy forgetfulness that had put him in a way of discovering the whole of the
dark

dark business, and promising Mrs. Thomas that every justice should be done her, he returned hastily to Lord Arrowsworth.—His Lordship was surprised at his hurried air; but Forester apologizing for not executing his commission, earnestly requested that he might know the value of the ear-rings in his possession. Lord Arrowsworth answered, Eight hundred pounds, and expressed a wish to be acquainted with the reasons that induced him to ask.—“My Lord,” said Forester, “you are perfectly authorized to inquire the motives that influence my conduct; there is a black business to be unravelled; these jewels may throw some light upon it: when I am myself a master of the facts you shall know all; at present forgive my presumption, if I beg you to delay the alteration of these ear-rings for a fortnight.”

“Willingly,” said Lord Arrowsworth; “yet if you think you knew the former owner, I can vouch that you labor under a mistake. The jeweller informed me, that
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these ear-rings belonged to the lady of an emigrant of distinction, who, from the pressure of distress, was obliged to part with them."

"Probably, my Lord, there may be some mistake; permit me to make every inquiry." He then left the house, and walked hastily towards Charing Cross. The jeweller was at home; at first sight he denied having mentioned them as the property of an emigrant:—"The necklace I sent this morning," said he, "was so; if I have made a mistake, I ask his Lordship's pardon; I bought these ear-rings at a public sale."

Forester inquired at what house, and was directed to an auction-room near Covent Garden; thither he bent his steps, and, after a long and tedious investigation, traced the jewels to the shop of an eminent pawnbroker. Here he made an eager inquiry. The man seemed no ways alarmed; he remembered the ear-rings, and produced a ticket, of which he said the person who pawned

pawned them had a duplicate; but as she had not redeemed them, they had been sold by public auction. Forester looked at the ticket; it acknowledged the receipt of three hundred pounds by Ann Phillips; he remembered Lady Fazakerly called her maid by that name, and all doubt vanished from his mind. On his return home, Forester detailed all the particulars of this nefarious business to Lord Arrowsworth; he shuddered as he repeated it, and, when he had concluded, sunk into a deep reverie; from this he was aroused by the voice of his Lordship.—

“The demon,” said he, “deserves, and doubtless will be exposed in her native colors; you must publish this affair to the world.”

“That she deserves every punishment, and that every punishment is inadequate to her crime,” said Forester, “I am convinced; but if I conceal this transaction, it is not from childish pity to a monster, but compassion to the feelings of a husband.

“I can

“ I can pity Colonel Meredith,” said Lord Arrowsworth, “ but I cannot therefore connive at villany. I know but little of the colonel ; I hear he is the son of a Mr. Meredith ; he left him at least a noble fortune ; I believe, *entre nous*, he is a natural son—for that he is to be pitied ; but birth is little regarded now-a-days—a wealthy steward, or a pillaging Indian fortune-hunter, elbows a peer of the realm.”

Lord Arrowsworth continued his digression, affirming with Sir Archy, that all our new nobility sprang from porter butts and tobacco hogheads. Having paid this tribute to his pride, he directed his discourse to its former channel, and forcibly pointed out the necessity of exposing the guilty Emily—pleaded the contagion of example, and declared that strict justice ought to be done.

“ Ah, my Lord !” said Forester, “ Give every man his deserts, and who shall scape a whipping ? If *strict justice* were to be administered, how should we shrink, when our

own actions were put to the fiery ordeal of impartial investigation?"

"That I have failings as well as others, I agree," said his Lordship, rather piqued; "but I can present myself to the eyes of all, as guiltless of any gross vice, or any thing approaching to a crime."

"It was not my intention, my Lord, to cite you as a particular instance of the truth of my assertion: I spoke of mankind in general. I know your worth; your soul recoils at the bare idea of criminality: but I fear you judge of others by your own standard. You think all must have the same elevation of sentiment; and pardon me, my Lord, if I suspect that, faultless yourself, you are not apt to pardon the failings of another."

"To what you term pardoning the failings of others, I can give no better name than the encouragement of vice or weakness. Would so many disorders pervade the world, if a strict attention were paid to the extirpation or exposure of evil?"

"But may not severity, my Lord, har-

den the heart, which a proper degree of lenity might reform?"

"Reform!" exclaimed his Lordship: "why not eradicate the evil at once; and crush by severity the hope of pardon, which seduces so many to err?"

"If you would have the world faultless, my Lord——"

"Faultless!—I ask pardon for twice repeating your words; but when vice glares in open day, to think of excusing it, is an absurdity, if not a crime. To the neglect of wholesome severity, or rather to the lenity of which you are the advocate, do we owe the number of wretches who subsist on the precarious pittance of infamy. Do not our streets nightly echo the dissonant mirth, and unhallowed orgies of the most abandoned prostitutes?"

"Do they not likewise echo their groans, my Lord? But is it to lenity you say they owe their vices? Oh, no! How many now hardened in wickedness once wept the delusion of the first false step,

step, and would have returned to the pale of virtue, had not the stern censure of the world 'shut the gates of mercy' on them; abandoned by that world, they bade defiance to its laws, cursed its severity (for to that they owed their opprobrium), and in a tumultuous liberty now pursue the short career of prostitution."

"If," said Lord Arrowsworth, triumphantly, "you would pardon the deviations from virtue, how are you to distinguish the faultless from the guilty?"

"Do not mistake me, my Lord," replied Forester: "I am not the palliator of female errors; but I would make a distinction between the act of a moment where the head was alone to blame, and the deliberate vice that proceeds from the heart. The law pardons a murder, if not premeditated, and if committed in a moment of passion; it is the *deliberate* act alone that calls down the punishment."

"You have now convicted yourself," said his Lordship. "You cannot deny but

that Mrs. Meredith has, in the most cool and deliberate manner, slandered an innocent woman. Her crimes deserve punishment; and the sufferings of her oppressed servant call down the most exemplary vengeance on her head."

"I cannot tell, my Lord, how far I may be blameable in concealing the flagitious conduct of Mrs. Meredith; but surely, while I despise and execrate her, I may be justified, if I have some pity on her husband and relatives. From what I have seen of Colonel Meredith, I believe him to be a worthy generous man; and let but a round of pleasure pall upon his senses, he will be found to possess virtues, that, in private life, will afford that happiness he fails to attain in a more turbulent sphere. A discreet wife might effect the change: he unfortunately has chosen a dissipated woman; but may he not make her sensible of her errors?"

"Never, never."

"Perhaps, then, my Lord, I may effect some good. I will seek Mrs. Meredith,

dith, point out her vices, and make her blush at her own deformity."

"Nay, sir," said Lord Arrowsworth, smiling, "Hercules *only* took the earth on his shoulders; *you* would achieve a more arduous task—the reformation of a coquet."

He then left the room.

Forester, when alone, was enabled to reflect on the affair in a dispassionate manner: he sat some time lost in thought, when a servant delivered him a letter brought that morning from his lodgings.

"To REGINALD FORESTER, *Esq. in Bond Street, leading out of Oxford Street, in London, these.*

"SIR,

Elm Grove.

"THE desire my nephew, Cuthbert Apfley, *Esq.* expressed that I should get somebody to write, is the cause of my troubling you at this present time. My nephew, sir, is very ill; I saw it when I was

in London. He scarcely eats enough to support life, and loaths the sight of food, which makes me imagine that his stomach is weak; loss of appetite is a certain sign of a weak stomach. He was removed 'yesterday from the house of his father, Arthur Apsley, Esq. to the Hot Wells near Bristol, for the benefit of the air; but, had my opinion been asked, he should have come to Elm Grove, where *I* would have undertaken his cure at my own peril.

“As for my nephew, Sinclair (except just at meals), I see but little of him. The Spaniards, under Fernando Cortez, were taken for a part of the quadrupeds they bestrode. Now my nephew has the mania to be almost always in the saddle, and, had he been the discoverer of America, might have passed for a centaur; his spirits are volatile, and he cares not what risks he incurs. I often put him in mind of his broken ribs (of which he hates the mention), and give that excellent advice which Ovid puts into the mouth of Apollo, when he would dissuade

suade Phaëton from destruction—‘ Spare, boy, the spurs, and strongly make use of the reins.’—I am not quite clear, whether I am justified in using the word *spur*, particularly as Phaëton was to mount a *chariot*. But the word *stimulus* may apply to many things; and I do not wish to begin my letter again, as I am much troubled with the *arthritis vaga* in my right arm.

“ I hope, sir, that you will not deem me improperly officious, if I bid you take great care of yourself. Guard against the night air, and studying too much at a low desk. You were very ill when I saw you in London; indeed little I saw there will, as Virgil says, please upon recollection.

“ I had almost forgotten to inform you, that although Cuthbert is too weak to write himself, he begs that you will let him hear from you, and hopes that you will make good a promise made him of visiting Appley Manor-house. Thus, sir, I have fulfilled his request of letting you hear about him, perhaps, at the expense of decorum;

for I think it an impropriety for two persons of different sexes to correspond, unless hymeneally or collaterally connected.

“ I am, sir,

“ Your most obedient,

“ And devoted servant,

“ SACHARISSA M'ALLISTER.”

Forester smiled at the delicacy of the good old lady, and immediately sat down to answer her letter, for he made no doubt that an answer was expected. He lamented the ill health of his friend, paid many compliments to her medical abilities, desired his remembrance to Sinclair, but excused himself from visiting Apsley Manor-house for the present. To Cuthbert his letter was most affectionate and consolatory. He did not bid him take patience, an advice always productive of a different effect than the intended; he gave none of those awkward condolences which irritate rather than appease a wounded mind. His letter was of a different nature. He confessed
that

that his sufferings were great, and his wrongs many, but bade him exert his strength of mind, which was but for a moment depressed; pointed out the many advantages he derived from nature and education, and drew a picture of life in the glowing tints of enthusiasm. A moment's recollection convinced Forester that the picture was flattering; but, as Cuthbert might be deceived into a return of spirits, by contemplating mankind on the bright side, he let it pass, though he could not but smile at the Utopia his fancy had created.

CHAP. III.

SIX weeks passed away without any message from Creswell. The time was devoted to study, so well blended with amusement, that it insensibly took its flight; and Forester was only amazed that he had received no answer from Cuthbert: at length, he wrote to Sinclair, begging to be relieved from suspense. Not having seen Hartlebury for many days, he resolved to visit him: he was admitted, and found his friend in a morning gown, conversing with a person, whose appearance denoted the severity of affliction; his eye was downcast, and his cheek hollow and colorless; yet sometimes a ray of animation would illumine his countenance, and show clearly that he once knew better days.

“ I am glad you are come,” said Hartlebury to Forester: “ this unfortunate gentleman was wishing the world to be acquainted

quainted with his history, as a penance for his follies; perhaps you, my friend, may derive some advantage from the recital. Mr. Clavill will, I am sure, relate the most striking facts."

Clavill half groaned: "To your humanity," said he, "I owe my liberty and——"

"We will talk of that, sir, another time," cried Hartlebury; "you will oblige me by not mentioning it now."

"I ought to obey you," said Clavill. "My history is short, but abounding in crime. I was not always clothed in the garb of poverty. Upon the death of my father, I came into the possession of an uncumbered estate of three thousand a year; beloved by the tenants, and respected by the whole county, I might have been happy. What was the ruin of my fortune?—Gaming. What was the ruin of my peace of mind?—The seduction of an amiable woman. Of all the ladies resident in my neighbourhood, Edmunda Nugent was the fairest. Her father, Sir Edmund

Nugent, idolized rather than loved her. The most eminent masters were engaged at an immense expense, to teach what the quick ideas of the pupil soon acquired, and easily retained. In public she was the envy of the female world, in private the theme of detraction. Her competitors agreed that Edmunda was beautiful, that Edmunda was accomplished; but Edmunda was illegitimate. The fair creature had another failing; nor were her rivals slow in discovering it. Her father had frequently declared his intention of leaving her his whole property. His income was near twelve thousand a year; the certainty of this immense wealth caused pride to take possession of a heart, where otherwise no unworthy passion could find a place. Several were the proposals made to Sir Edmund for his darling daughter, and these were all rejected on her part. She had formed a resolution not to leave her father, and declared that she would remain unmarried, provided the object on whom she might fix her affections would not

not consent to reside at the mansion of Sir Edmund. Under these circumstances I ventured to address her : my particular attentions were the talk of the whole county, and fame had more than once privately married us ; but a sad reverse awaited on security. Sir Edmund was fond of hunting ; pursuing his favorite amusement, he fell from his horse, fractured his skull, and was brought home lifeless. Every endeavour was made to find a will, but the search was fruitless—Sir Edmund had died intestate. One of his distant relations, whose enmity to him was notorious, took possession of his whole estate, and determined to satiate the vengeance he could not execute on the father, on the head of the defenceless daughter. Edmunda had now to learn the bitter task of humility. Her sorrow was tumultuous. She still expected to be treated as an heiress ; but the conduct of the few friends she had made, soon gave her to understand that her fortunes were altered. Fortunately for me, as I then thought, I had not publicly made any pretensions

tensions to the fair mourner. I neither abated my attentions, or talked less to her of love; but my ideas took a new turn. I would have made the *heirefs* my wife; the *desitute Edmunda* I resolved to obtain on easier terms.

“ Conceive the horror of her feelings, when I first made the infamous proposal. She cast on me a look, that blended in it a thousand passions, and hastily quitted the room. But let me not detail all the arts I put in practice; in short, I triumphed, and Edmunda was undone.

“ Though hushed for a while, her feelings severely reproached her; a gloomy melancholy took possession of her mind, and my endeavours to sooth her, but augmented the cloud. One morning (a morning of horror), I returned from a short ride. I inquired for Edmunda: she was in her chamber, and had given orders not to be disturbed. I was, however, determined to see her, and tapped softly at the door of her apartment: no answer was returned: I repeated the knock, and louder: still no answer.

swer. I then entreated her to admit me; but the same silence prevailing, a dreadful presentiment of what had passed rushed upon my mind; and, in a fit of desperation, I burst open the door with my foot. Gracious heaven! what a sight of horror! Edmunda lay on the floor bathed in blood. She had cut the arteries of her arm; a riband was tied in a noose round her neck, by which it appeared she first would have put a period to her existence by strangulation. During a week I was insensible to all that passed. The coroner had brought in a verdict of lunacy; and the unfortunate Edmunda had been, by order of my steward, privately interred in the parish-church. As soon as the first shock was in some measure weakened, a letter was brought me: it was from the woman I had destroyed. Her waiting-maid found it in the 'Nouvelle Heloise,' and placed in that part where St. Preux defends the act of suicide."

Clavill took a letter from his pocket-book—

book—shuddered—dropped a tear, and read as follows :

“ IN the moment of determined self-destruction, do I trace these lines. I cannot live, that scorn may point the finger at me ; but it is necessary that I attribute my death to him who caused it. Clavill, you are *not* the man ;—no, it was my father ; my tender, my indulgent father, who lived but upon my smiles ; who was wretched when I was from his sight : *he* caused me to lift my hand against myself : *he*, and *he alone*, was the author of my death. I was young and beautiful : I speak not this from vanity ; all vanity with me is past—my different acquirements were the theme of panegyric, and Edmunda Nugent was looked up to as a being of a superior order. My father thought no pains, no expense, too great to enlarge my mind, or adorn my person : he gave me a taste for luxury, gratified my every wish, and reproved me for not forming more. He dies : I am illegitimate ; a stranger

stranger takes his right, and I am thrown upon the pity of a world of which I once thought myself the arbitress. Say, Clavill, would you have courted the heiress of Sir Edmund Nugent to be yours on dishonorable terms? No; it was the forlorn Edmunda you dared to insult. Who left her forlorn?—Her father, who taught her wants, and gave her not the power to gratify them. I mean not to excuse the rash action I am about to commit. I would address myself to Heaven, but dare not. May you be happy, Clavill. The fatal riband now lies before me, by which I may at once leave a world productive of nothing but misery to

“EDMUNDA.”

“In the first burst of passion,” continued Clavill, “I could have followed the example of the woman I had so cruelly wronged; but fear arrested my arm. I left the country, hoping, in the dissipation of the capital, to experience relief from the stings

stings of conscience. In evil hour did I fly to London: the mania of gaming seized me: nightly did I lose immense sums at play, and was accounted one of the most happy and thoughtless men, when my heart was torn with anguish. Ruin stared me in the face. My creditors became clamorous. I resolved to make a desperate effort, and one unfortunate night stripped me of my last guinea. At length I was arrested, and conveyed to the King's Bench, where this generous man——"

"Hold, hold," cried Hartlebury; "no more of that."

"Why wish to stop my acknowledgments, sir?" said Clavill; "why should an action that——"

"If I have obliged you, sir," interrupted Hartlebury, "pray return the obligation by not hurting my feelings. I knew you once, Mr. Clavill, in the gay circles of life, and am glad that a conviction of their futility will give you a taste for more retired scenes.

scenes. Perhaps I may be of use to you ; at least you shall command all in my power."

He then requested to speak with him in another room ; and apologizing to Forester, both withdrew.

The character of Hartlebury was now developed. He censured the vicious, but protected the humble penitent ; and yet Emily had described him as a profligate. Forester could scarcely contain his indignation at the idea ; yet he reflected that the criminal can never patiently allow others to enjoy the dignity of virtue. He continued musing, when his eye rested upon an unfolded paper ; it was poetry : curiosity prompted him to the perusal.

EGERTON.

Still the wave fullen heav'd, still the wind hollow blew,
Though the rage of the tempest was past ;
Dismay o'er the ocean triumphantly flew,
A wreck all around him met Egerton's view,
While firmly he clung to the mast.

Alas !

Alas! but for this, gentle youth, didst thou stray
In the death-dealing isles of the west?
Alas! but for this, didst thou sigh for the day
When fortune and glory thy toils should repay,
And give thee to England and rest?

The moment arriv'd, and what joy could compare
With the transport that glow'd in his mind!
But scarcely had hope superseded despair,
When the vessel that bore him to all he held dear,
Was a prey to the ocean consign'd.

In England a maid possess'd Egerton's love;
She as fondly ador'd him again;
And oftimes, her passion unalter'd to prove,
At eve to the church of the village would rove,
And sigh as she look'd at the vane.

Cease, cease, O fond maiden, the vane to behold,
For the wind that impels it to wave,
No more shall the sails of thy lover unfold,
But hollow shall howl o'er his relics so cold,
Entomb'd in a watery grave.

Now night blacken'd round him, yet Egerton clung
To the mast with a sinewy arm;
For hope still surviv'd; e'en the billows among,
Her lay the enchantress delusively sung,
And sooth'd each contending alarm.

“What

"What if, when the morning arises," he cried,
"Some vessel I chance to espy?"—
The morning arose—but on every side,
(Portending destruction) the sea spreading wide;
Was all that met Egerton's eye.

"Alas!" he exclaim'd, "am I doom'd to the wave;
Ere yet half my course I have run?
Yet I will not despair—there is One who can save;
With humble devotion his mercy I crave,
And bow to his will—be it done!"

At a distance, with joy, he a vessel espies,
But sometimes 'tis lost in the waves;
What transports in Egerton's bosom arise!
With voice loudly rais'd, for assistance he cries;
Now he weeps, now with wildness he raves.

But vain are thy transports; as vain are thy tears;
Poor youth, the delusion give o'er;
Regardless the vessel her course onward steers;
More distant the object each moment appears,
And now he beholds it no more.

"Farewell then, my love," he exclaims with a sigh;
"For ever, I fear, we must part:
In a moment like this, if I tremble to die;
If a pang rend my breast, if a tear dim my eye,
'Tis thy image that softens my heart.

"Farewell

"Farewell then, my love; nor give way to thy woes;
My loss 'twere in vain to deplore;
The finger of death soon my eyelids shall close,
And nought shall denote where the relics repose
Of him who must soon be no more.

"Yet oft let remembrance present to thy mind,
The love I bore firmly to thee;
Be happy—I sink in the ocean, resign'd—
But, ha!—see a sail!—and the favoring wind
Impels it—oh transport!—to me."

The vessel approach'd, and the generous crew
Their speedy assistance afford;
Each man to the task with alacrity flew;
A rope to the sufferer, exhausted, they threw,
And soon was he safely on board.

But, alas, he was speechless! no words could impart
His joy—thus escap'd from the wreck;
To relieve his full bosom, no soothing tears start;
He roll'd his glaz'd eyes—laid his hands on his heart,
And in transport—expir'd on the deck.

Forester had just finished the lines, when
his friend re-entered the room. "You see
I am become a spy," said he; "but I can-
not repent my imprudence, as I conceive
you to be the author of these verses."

You

“ You may then repent at your leisure,” said Hartlebury, “ for I can assure you I am not ; I never could rhyme luckily in my life. In my younger days, I penned a sublime sonnet to a fair nymph ; but as I happened, unfortunately, to bring in *rose*, as a jingle to *nose*, I was dismissed for my pains ; the dear creature took it for a reflection. These lines were written by a friend of mine, who witnessed a fact nearly similar. But what is your opinion of the melancholy tale of Clavill ? is he not greatly to be pitied ? ”

Forester drew a comparison between Lord Arrowsworth and Hartlebury, much to the disadvantage of the former. He contrasted the severity of his Lordship, and the mild benevolence of his friend—oh, how great the contrast ! “ I was much touched,” said he, after a pause, “ by the woeful catastrophe of Edmunda, and no less at the appearance of sincerity evident in the repentance of Mr. Clavill. But may I entreat you to give me the particulars of your meeting ?

ing?—I guess the circumstance—you relieved him from prison.”

“ It would be affectation,” said Hartlebury, “ to deny it. I make it a rule to visit the different places of confinement, and set at liberty the unfortunate debtors detained for small sums. I was passing through the King’s Bench when the faded form of Clavill glided by me : shocked at his appearance, I followed, and offered him a small sum, pretending not to recollect his face : he drew back, thanked me, but bade me bestow my bounty on more deserving objects. From that moment I resolved to set him free ; eight hundred pounds were the price of his ransom, and I willingly gave it, as I could by that means restore a penitent offender to the world.”

“ Eight hundred pounds !” exclaimed Forester ; “ good heavens ! can you reconcile your generosity and your prudence ? Were your fortune greater, and you have often told me it was limited——”

“ Listen

“ Listen to me, my young friend ; I will open my whole heart to you, but let secrecy seal your lips. I came into the possession of a large fortune—my former extravagance reduced it—gaming was my foible, but I soon saw its folly ; women abused my credulity, but I perceived their arts. Having been acquainted with few but the worst of the sex, I contracted the style of a woman-hater, which, though my better reason condemns, I yet choose to continue. A man, to live in the world, had better have the character of eccentricity than none at all. My known attachment to gaming procures me a passport to the circles of fashion ; I live at small expense, see no company at home, and seldom give a formal dinner at a tavern : by this frugality I am enabled to save three hundred pounds half-yearly ; these are devoted to gaming. If successful, I venture larger sums, and by that means acquire the name of a gamester : the money I win is not devoted to external show ; I do not admire an equi-

page that rolls upon the four aces; I expend my ill-gotten wealth in relieving the poor debtor from the horrors of confinement, or seek out modest worth that shrinks from the idea of obligation.—You have now my history.”

Surprise and veneration had kept Forester so long silent; at length, while the tears stood in his eyes, he exclaimed, “Hartlebury, you are above praise—never did I believe the existence of so much virtue.”

“I am sorry for that,” replied Hartlebury; “for I must then conclude, that there are few who know how to be happy: but do you not think me a monopolist of pleasure, when I do not communicate to the world the secret by which I have secured my own approbation?”

“Ah!” said Forester with a mournful smile, “few, I fear, profit by it. How long has Clavill been liberated?”

“Just two days prior to the discovery of Apsley’s unfortunate delusion—I had been a considerable gainer some time before—had
not

not Clavill's ransom been so considerable, I might have been enabled to accommodate your friend Cuthbert with a sum sufficient to extricate him; but I hope his father will make allowance for the wildness of youth."

Forester concurred in the wish, and returned to Lord Arrowsworth more charmed than ever with Hartlebury.

Three weeks had passed away since Forester had written to Sinclair; and as he received no answer, he feared the worst. At length he resolved to undertake a journey to Bristol, and was ordering a chaise to be ready next morning, when he was informed that a gentleman in the parlour requested to speak with him; he obeyed the summons, and to his astonishment beheld Colonel Meredith. Forester was alarmed at his appearance; he was in a riding dress, his countenance was ghastly, and his voice hurried.

"You know, you must know," ex-

claimed he, "where they are—you can—you will—you must inform me."

Forester begged him to be composed, and say what information he required.

"What!" raved Meredith, "must I recapitulate the horrible tale? spare me—spare me—you *must* know it all; 'I am—I am—ruined—ruined for ever—lost beyond the power of redemption!'"

Forester protested he was ignorant of the cause of his agitation.

"How!" exclaimed Meredith, foaming with rage, "do not the very children mock me as I pass? Fool! dupe that I am! Emily, my wife—furies blast the name! has eloped—has left me—left me who adored her!"

His auditor was thrilled with horror—"Eloped!" faintly repeated he; "with whom?"

"Pretend not ignorance; you know with whom; you know where they are hidden; but let them not hope to escape my vengeance."

"For

"For Heaven's sake be calm; I protest by all that's sacred, upon my honor; I know not where they are, or who is the person you so justly execrate."

"His name is Apfley; the wretch you took by the hand—the censor of vice—the man of sentiment—infernal hypocrite! He, he seduced my wife, after a union of little more than two months."

Had the ground, opening at the feet of Forester, vomited flames, and menaced instant destruction, his surprise had been less than what he now experienced; he staggered to a chair, and covered his face with his hands.

"Your confusion shows you know where these wretches are concealed," raved Meredith: "give them to my fury; my revenge shall exceed all the fables of Turkish severity."

Forester remained silent.

"Tell me this instant where they are, or tremble——"

“ Hold, Colonel Meredith !” said Forester, rising with dignity. “ I can allow much for the agitation of your spirits ; but do not imagine, if I even did know where the objects of your pursuit were concealed, that *menace* would induce me to make the discovery. I allow the extent of your wrongs, but should imagine that contempt, and not revenge, ought to be the predominant feeling of your heart. I have many proofs how unworthy your wife is of regard ; when I say this, you will naturally observe that I ought to have warned you from the snare ; to this I reply, that I had no *positive* proofs of her turpitude prior to your union with her. If you will promise to act with calmness, I will inform you of some circumstances by which you will be convinced, that the man I once esteemed my friend is sufficiently punished by the possession of his wishes.”

Meredith promised to behave with temper, and Forester began to detail the various

rious acts of atrocity committed by the vile Emily. Meredith groaned deeply, but was silent. When the narration ceased, he asked, in a low voice, if any third person were present during the conversations of Cuthbert and himself? Upon being told there was, "Permit me," said the colonel, "to inquire who. I doubt not your words; I remember the affair of the jewels; but the affair is serious: forgive me; I scarce know what I say."

"I am happy," replied Forester, "to be able to produce an unexceptionable witness—Mr. Hartlebury."

"Will he confirm your assertions?"

"He certainly will."

"Then I am satisfied. I will take till to-morrow to reflect. Heaven preserve them from an accidental meeting with a man they have so much injured."

At this moment a letter was delivered to Forester; the post-mark was of Bristol: he hastily tore it open.

“ Apsley Manor House,
near Bristol.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ MY head is in such a bustle since last Saturday, that I fear I shall not be able to tell you the whole story. Such a misfortune! My poor father! I am afraid he will not survive it; and my aunt, who endeavours to comfort him, only makes him worse. I am sorry to inform you that my brother Cuthbert is gone off, the Lord knows where, with a certain lady of your acquaintance, Mrs. Meredith. But I begin the story at the wrong end. Indeed, I am out of all patience, and scarce know whether I am in England or France. The devil take all woman-kind, if such be the fruits of gaining their *esteem*, as they call it! Last Saturday morning a man and horse came to Elm Grove, with a letter from my father: he begged me to come to him without delay; off I set, and Crop carried me in less than three quarters of an hour—pretty smart riding, considering it was all up hill and
down.

down. My father looked shockingly, and was so tormented by his feelings, that he quite forgot his gout. Mrs. Meredith, it seems, had been at the Hot-well with her husband for about three weeks or a month, and in that time had prevailed on Cuthbert (for I am sure he was not in fault) to set off with her to the devil. All what I wish is, that she had taken the journey alone: she knows the way blindfold. In short, my father is so wretched, that I am very angry with Cuthbert, and think, that when he is so severe on others; he ought to have an eye to his own conduct. He left my poor father a letter, saying that some particular affair called him away for some time; but the fact was too well known, and was noised abroad in a moment.—He was seen with Mrs. Meredith, in a post-chaise and four, on the London road; and what is the worst of all, she is reported to have carried off jewels and money to the amount of several thousand pounds. If true, Cuthbert is inexcusable. Had he loved her so violently,

no need of pecuniary inducements. But don't, pray don't, be too angry with him; perhaps he may see his folly, and repent; that is my father's only hope. My aunt is very violent; she says she is sure that I should never have exposed my relations in such a manner: yet if the poor old lady knew as much as you and I, she would have little reason to thank my steadiness. If you should see Cuthbert, my dear Mr. Forester, do pray tell him how much we are all grieved. Say that my father will break his heart, and that even I must no longer defend him. I received your letter some weeks ago: I should certainly have answered it, if Cuthbert had not prevented me, by saying that he should write himself, or otherwise you would be too much alarmed. I dare say she was then courting him to do all the mischief. I mean to ask my father's permission to go up to London, in order to find out Cuthbert, and tell him in what distress his flight has involved us. I hope my aunt will allow me to depart alone; for

for although she exclaims with bitterness against my brother, she would not willingly trust me from her sight ; and since I have used her so ill, I think it but just to allow her her own way. I beg my respects to Mr. Hartlebury, and remain,

“ Dear sir,

“ Your friend and servant,

“ SINCLAIR APSLEY.

“ P. S. As soon as Mrs. Meredith came to the Hot-well, my brother recovered surprisingly. I say no more.”

“ That letter is from Bristol,” exclaimed Meredith, relapsing into fury : “ it is from the villain who has ruined my peace ; give it me, I insist—I mean I beg ; I entreat you to give it me.”

“ It is from Bristol,” replied Forester ; “ read it ; it will hurt your feelings, but will corroborate my testimony.”

Meredith read the letter ; his hands trembled ; a thick mist obscured his sight, and he leaned against the wainscot for sup-

port. "It is true," said he. "By this paper I am convinced you are not deceived. I despise her. But say, Forester, will you not despise me, if I suffer this Apsley to escape the sword, that he may lie open to the law?"

"So far," said Forester, "from blaming your conduct, in nobly disdaining reparation founded in blood, I should esteem you as possessing a mind superior to the slavish rules by which the votaries of false honor are biased. But should you suffer the law to take its course, will a few thousands, of which you are not in want, compensate for the ignominy of hearing your name the theme of ribald jesters, and your conduct the animadversion of a public court?"

"Must I, then, tamely submit to my injuries?"

"Weak are your feelings to those which the guilty parties will soon experience."

"They are guilty; let them suffer. I can accuse myself of no fault, yet I am on the rack."

"You must summon the aid of reason : you have lost a wife unworthy of your love. What would have been your feelings, had you been acquainted with her crimes before she had committed that by which you are at liberty to break your bonds ? You must, in common with the whole world, execrate your guilty wife ; but you may spare Apsley, like yourself, a victim to her arts. Confess, Meredith, that she is unworthy a thought."

"Alas !" cried Meredith, "I loved her tenderly ; loved her with adoration—*loved!*—oh, I feel I love her still ; I ever shall love her."

"She is, indeed, a fascinating creature," said Forester : "her ductility of temper, which accommodates itself to the different feelings of her adorers, secures her universal empire. She can laugh with the gay, reason with the serious, and turn the arms of the inconstant upon himself : but her arts, once known, lose their power. We may admire, but we must despise a coquet. It is in the same manner we behold a beautiful
wanton ;

wanton ; we confess her charms, but know them to be common property."

All the arguments Forester could adduce, were incompetent to assuage the anguish of Meredith : he raved at one moment, and swore eternal hatred ; at another, he recapitulated the good qualities, the sweetness and beauty of his Emily. Forester proposed that he should visit Hartlebury : after some faint refusals, it was agreed to ; and the conversation that passed, fully convinced Meredith of the vile conduct of the woman he once thought superior even to the foibles of her sex.

CHAP. IV.

The dawn is overcast ; the morning low'rs ;
And heavily, in clouds, brings on the day—
The great, th' important day——— !

ADDISON.

WHILE Forester was endeavouring to calm the feelings of an injured husband, Sinclair Apsley was busied in persuading his father to permit his journey to London. This was always refused ; but no news arriving of Cuthbert, the health of Mr. Apsley declined so rapidly, that Miss M'Alister, who constantly attended him, began to doubt her own medical abilities, and proposed calling in a physician : this Mr. Apsley objected to, and anxiously awaited tidings of his fugitive son. At length, exhausted by his feelings, he proposed going himself to London. " I will find Mr. Forester," said he to Sinclair : " perhaps Cuthbert, though he neglects his poor father, may have
written

written to him ; yet, if he have any shame left, he will hide himself from every eye. Poor boy ! that it should ever come to this ! You, Sinclair, shall accompany me, for I know you with it. Your good aunt," added he, mournfully smiling, " will be content to trust you with me."

But he was much deceived. Miss M'Alister, though she reprobated Cuthbert and London, would not hear of being left behind : it was therefore settled that they should leave Apsley House on the morrow ; Sinclair, Miss M'Alister, and her old maid Kitty, in one chaise, and Mr. Apsley, who, on account of the gout, would take shorter stages, in another. Sinclair would have preferred riding on horseback ; but his aunt would not hear of it. " It was indelicate," she said, " for two females to be alone in a post-chaise." He was obliged to submit.

The eventful morning dawned ; the weather was rainy and tempestuous ; and the party proceeded with dejected hearts, but arising from different causes. Sinclair was out of humor

humor with his aunt for confining him in a chaise, and wishing him to swallow her cordial, to prevent wind in the stomach. Miss M'Allister recollected, with no degree of pleasure, her former inauspicious egress from Somersetshire; and Kitty reflected, that, had she taken the journey five and thirty years before, she would have been free from virgin restraints; for she was persuaded that in London husbands were to be had by wholesale.

The party were in the midst of Marlborough downs, when the chaise, by falling into a deep rut, gave a sudden jolt. "Bless my soul," exclaimed Miss M'Allister, "we shall certainly exceed the centre of gravity."

"Don't be alarmed," muttered Sinclair; "there is no danger: I am with you, and you know the proverb."

He had no sooner said the word, than, in a moment, the chaise was overturned: the spokes of the wheel had snapped. "I thought so," screamed Kitty, as she fell.

Quick

Quick as lightning, Sinclair tore open the chaise door, and first extricated his aunt, and then her maid: both were in violent hysterics, though unhurt. The postillion was busied in unharnessing the horses; and while Sinclair held his aunt, poor Kitty was left to wallow in the mud at her discretion. At length, both recovered a sense of their situation. The cherry-coloured satin of Miss M'Allister, thanks to the care of Sinclair, had suffered little; but the yellow damask of Kitty was so woefully bedaubed, that she quite forgot her own situation, and only lamented the fate of her gown. Sinclair consoled her, by ironically assuring her that the rain would soon wash it clean. He pulled off his great coat, and wrapping it round his aunt, though she violently opposed it, begged her to be comforted, for that he would take one of the horses, and ride to the next town for a conveyance. But Miss M'Allister begged him not to leave her, and assured him that she should die with fear, if he quitted her even for a moment.

moment. He acquiesced, and the postillion was dispatched with the horses to procure assistance. The party walked slowly on: a profound silence reigned for some time: at length Kitty groaned, and Miss M'Allister exclaimed, "Well! to be sure we are at the *ne plus ultra* of misfortune! nothing but disasters. As Swift says, 'It cannot rain, but it pours.' Well! if ever I saw such a day; the atmosphere is one cloud: I will not complain; but woe is me, that I ever left Elm Grove! as Seneca justly observes—As I am a Christian soul, I have lost my shoe! Pray look for it, Sinclair; there it is; pour out the water; thank you, my dear.—I shall catch my death: but I have a cordial by me; it will save all our lives.—Oh dear! well! this is the worst of all; the bottle is broke in my pocket."

Sinclair was rejoiced to hear it, and at the same time beheld a cart at some distance. He communicated this to his companions. The vehicle soon overtook them. The driver was informed of the misfortune, which

which the shattered chaise but too much indicated. "You may come in, and welcome," said the man. "I have only two women here, that our justices be passing to the next parish; a *kiple of vagrom varmint!*"

Miss M'Allister declared that her delicacy would be shocked to a degree, if she put a foot in such a conveyance; and the man, giving her a hearty curse, said she might ride in the next cart she used for nothing; and he hoped it would not be long first. Sinclair was only prevented from chastising his insolence, by the screams of his companions, who, clinging round him, begged him to desist.

Sinclair was now completely out of temper. He sharply ridiculed the punctilio which had prevented their accommodation. His aunt, to pacify him, vowed that if the chaise did not arrive, she would use the next vehicle that offered, be it what it might. The words had scarce passed her lips, when Sinclair beheld a hearse and six on a slow trot, and likely to overtake them:

he

he stopped short, and pointed out the object. Miss M'Allister, bound by her word, of which she was very tenacious, grounded all hope upon the refusal of Kitty, who wept and prayed, but who wept and prayed in vain. The hearse came up with them. The driver agreed to accommodate the ladies with a seat on the top; and it was only by threatening Kitty with being left alone, that she could be induced to mount the funereal car. The rain, which before was violent, now fell in such torrents, that Sinclair, alarmed for his aunt, actually proposed that she should be an inside passenger.

"Far be the omen from me," exclaimed Miss M'Allister. "What! shall I be fellow-traveller with a caput mortuum?"

The driver seeing that Kitty was ready to faint at the proposal, said, "Perhaps, mistress, as t'other lady don't like it, *you* may choose an inside birth?"

"Oh dear," cried Kitty, with a scream almost amounting to a roar, "pray don't mention

mention it; if I did, I should soon be, as my mistress says, a *gaby montem* myself."

Sinclair could not refrain from casting an eye over the party. His aunt was seated on the front of the hearse, and Kitty close by her, in all the majesty of mud. The cherry-colored and yellow gowns formed a ludicrous contrast to the funereal hue of the attendants, three in number, who were seated behind. Sinclair shared the box with the driver.

"Well," sobbed Miss M'Allister, "if I once could revisit my penates, never would I quit them more. Always some sinister accident! Who would ever have imagined that any of the name of M'Allister would have been reduced to such streights? I protest I am a downright memento mori; and then such a *rigor* pervades my whole frame, that a Siberian winter were a torrid zone to it."

Sinclair renewed his proposal of seeking a chaise. He gave half-a-guinea to one of the
the

the attendants, and begged him to lend his horse, which was tied behind the hearse, the badness of the road preventing any faster progress than a very slow trot. His aunt consented, with difficulty, to his absence; but the hopes of a better vehicle reconciled her to the idea. Sinclair was out of sight in a moment.

The hearse slowly dragged along; and Kitty, afraid of silence, begged the driver to inform her what lady he was conveying to her long home?

"No lady at all," replied the man; "it is a gentleman I am to carry to London."

"A gentleman!" exclaimed Miss McAlister. "Lord bless me! and Sinclair wanted me to go in the inside!"

"Why, I don't think he'd do you much harm, madam," said the driver; "he's quiet enough now; God knows what he will be."

Kitty inquired his name; but the man refused to satisfy her curiosity.

"I never tell a secret," said he;

"but

“but so far I’ll inform you, that I don’t believe the gentleman in the hearse had his equal in England for spirit; and he was so strong, that if he took twenty chaps by the head, he’d set them spinning like tops.”

“A perfect Milo!” observed Miss M’Alister.

“Yes, ma’am,” said the man, not understanding her sapient remark, “he has often tript up the heels of Mendoza; a deadly strong, spirited——Ha! by jingo, there they are! look, Peter, the rascals are upon us!—To horse, to horse!”

The men descended with swiftness from their elevated situation, mounted their steeds, while he who had lent his to Sinclair, unharnessed one from the hearse, and all set off at a full gallop.

“Now the consummation of our disasters has taken place,” said Miss M’Alister; “the fates can do no more; we are marked by the hand of misfortune.”

Poor Kitty repeated her paternoster.

The

The horses stood still, and Miss M'Allister wondered what had caused the sudden flight of the attendants. "Well!" cried she, "Cowley observes, and very properly, that 'Some wise men, and some fools, we call.' Now, though we are women, I cannot but think the passage may be applied to us; for I fear, Kitty, we are of the latter class." She ended with a deep sigh, and pulled Sinclair's wet great coat over her shoulders. Both were silent for a few minutes: at length a loud halloo was heard, and Miss M'Allister looking up, observed the hearse to be surrounded by a party of dragoons, and two men with blue coats, and cockades in their hats. She sat motionless, and one of the dragoons ordered her to stop.

"So I do; the more hard is my lot," said Miss M'Allister; "but, for Heaven's sake, tell me what you want? If you mean to kill us, I beg you will put us out of our pain as soon as possible."

"Oh, pray don't mention it," screamed
VOL. II. E Kitty.

Kitty. "If we must be killed, I beg of you to be as long about it as you can. If you only come for the gentleman in the coffin, I can assure you I know nothing about him, and that I am innocent of all his crimes."

"Aye, aye," said one of the men in blue, "we'll soon see what the gentleman is made of." And opening the door of the hearse, he swore he would be bound it was as good French brandy as ever was tipped over tongue.

"So you think then, you sir, in the red gown," added he, "that we did not trace this all the way from Devonshire: we keep a pretty sharp look-out. And so you have put on petticoats, and be hanged to ye; but I'll tell you what, you are both old offenders; I see that with half an eye."

"Indeed," replied Miss M'Allister, "you are right when you call us old; nay, I believe and know that we are both sad sinners; yet I don't remember that I ever defrauded

frauded any one ; and Kitty has been a faithful servant to me."

" Oh, oh! your name is Kitty, Mr. Rascal, is it? Well! well! you'll both be hanged, if you don't mind your eye. But first let me see if you have any arms about you. Should you pop at us in the mean time, remember it is death without reprieve."

They then pulled away the great coat of Sinclair from the shoulders of the astonished Miss M'Allister, and drew from the pockets a pair of pistols.

" Aye, aye, 'tis plain enough," cried the by-standers ; " they are old offenders ; and by the sight of the rest, no doubt they are concerned in the murder of poor Jack Williams. They'll stretch a cord for it : hanging is too good for them."

But one dragoon, with more humanity than the rest, helped the forlorn pair to descend, and said it was impossible that they could be any thing else than a couple of crazy old women.

“What!” exclaimed Miss M‘Allister; “crazy! Sir, I’d have you to know that I never was taken for a lunatic before. As to your being officers, I much doubt; for it is your office to protect, and not insult the fair sex. If my nephew Sinclair Apfley, Esq. were here, he should teach you to—— but as I live, a chaise comes this way; it is surely he; if I am not deceived, he shall teach you the respect due to persons of family, from the dregs of plebeian obscurity.”

The chaise rapidly advanced, and Sinclair was seen in the saddle, driving as hard as the powers of the horses would permit.—His person was known to one of the custom-house-officers. A single word settled the business; and he begged his aunt to get quickly in the chaise, for he declared that it rained like a watering-pot.

“First let me,” said she, “explain to this person.”

“But, my dear aunt, you’ll catch your death.”

“Let

“ Let me tell you, fir,” said the enraged genealogist, “ that the name of M‘Allister is one of the most ancient in the kingdom ; and if the last male heir had not died of cutting his teeth, it would not yet have been extinct. There were,” said she, counting on her fingers, “ the families of the Colvilles, the Hartingtons, the Fazakerlys, the Osbaldestons, the Potheringhams, and the Whites ! He might have quartered all these arms ; but now there is nobody to quarter them, because his mother would not follow my advice, and let him wear an anodyne necklace. And is any of the name of M‘Allister to be called a smuggler ? It is a solecism. My nephew will witness for me that I never defrauded the revenue in my life.”

“ Nor I, neither,” cried Kitty, who now began to comprehend what was going forward, “ except by buying a pound or two of run tea, that turned out to be sloe-leaves after all.”

Miss M‘Allister would have continued her invective, had not Sinclair observed

that the men were only deficient in respect, from an ignorance of the antiquity of her family; and that though a number of her name had travelled inside, nobody would have suspected to have found a M'Allister on the outside of a hearse.

"Upon my life, my dear, you are in the right," said she. "Well, gentlemen, a learned author says, a burden becomes light, if well borne. I shall therefore endeavour to forget what has passed. And now, nephew, help me into the chaise, for I begin to feel symptoms of the *miserere mei*."

Sinclair obeyed; and having recruited his spirits by a sip from the bottle of the custom-house-officer, assisted in seating his aunt and the unfortunate Kitty in the chaise. By proper care, both escaped colds, and the next day brought them without farther accident to London.

CHAP. V.

——— Methinks I tread in air.

Surprising happiness! unlook'd-for joy!

Never let love despair! DISTRESSED MOTHER.

WHILE Forester, actuated by the most benevolent motives, vainly endeavoured to discover the retreat of the deluded Apsley, that young man, blinded by momentary gratification, gave not a thought to the permanent blessings he had lost. The guilty Emily, by every blandishment in her power, strove to chase melancholy ideas from his brain; but reflection nevertheless obtruded itself, and presented to his view the despair of a father, who loved, who idolized him. He feared his curse; his brother too, whose follies he had reprobated, would now doubtless exult in his misfortune. Guilt had contaminated the heart of Cuthbert, and, being fallen in his own esteem, he conceived himself to be

so in that of others. One evening, as he was sitting in a melancholy mood by the side of his mistress, she tenderly inquired the cause of his dejection.

“Am I no longer dear to you?” said she; “and do you already repent that I have sacrificed all for your sake?”

Cuthbert pressed her hand, and turned away his face.

“You do not speak to me,” continued she; “’tis then as I suspected.” And tears (which she had at command) glittered in her eyes.

“No,” exclaimed Cuthbert with fervor; “no—I am not a monster of ingratitude. Not love you, Emily! *you* who have given up all for me! who have followed a wretched, undone——”

He stopped short: Emily, seizing his hand, begged him to proceed. He caught her in his arms, his head rested on her shoulder, and he sighed with bitterness.

“Perhaps,” said she, in the greatest agitation, “pecuniary embarrassment is the cause of your distress. Speak, I conjure you,

you, that in a moment I may put an end to your trouble."

"Can you forgive me, Emily? Say, can you forgive the man who has reduced you to misery? You but too well guess at the cause of my despair: for a short time I shall be enabled to shield you from want. But (wretch that I am!) what awaits my Emily when that time shall elapse?"

"That time is yet far distant, my Cuthbert." Emily then hastily arose, and went into the adjoining room.

The victim of passion threw himself upon the sofa: his hands were clasped to his forehead, and his manly frame heaved with convulsive sighs. He dared not behold the woman he had irreparably injured; and he judged of her feelings by his own.

In a short time she returned. "Look up, my Cuthbert," said she: "Fie! take comfort; I bring you relief."

He raised himself from the sofa, and gazing mournfully at her, beheld that she had

decorated her person with a profusion of diamonds. He started.

"Whence," cried he, "have you these jewels?"

"Knew you not that I possessed them?"

"You have never worn them, to my knowledge."

"That was because I was conscious how little I needed the adventitious aids of dress to charm the only man I ever loved. I am in no want of jewels while I possess your heart. Take them, they are yours; dispose of them and me as you please: the value is nearly eight thousand pounds."

Cuthbert trembled: something whispered to him that *now* was the time, if ever, to prove that all honor was not extinct in his bosom. He reflected, that although he was guilty of one crime, it did not follow that he must wilfully plunge into more.

Emily drew the pendants from her ears, and replaced all her treasure in the casket from whence she had taken them.

Cuth-

Cuthbert, in a hesitating manner, inquired how long she had possessed the jewels.

“The blockhead Meredith,” said she, “gave me the greatest part subsequent to our marriage. It was his refusing me a diamond-necklace I had set my heart upon, that produced the little fracas that ended in my vowing revenge. I think I have pretty well performed my vow,” added she, smiling: “I wish I could be a spectator of his despair; it must needs be farcical. Should not you like to witness it?” She then laughed with the malice of a fiend.

Cuthbert felt as if the struggles of departing life agitated his frame; his bosom heaved no sigh, nor could a tear force a passage to relieve his oppressed heart.—“Am I then,” cried he (after a pause of desperation), “a robber? Emily, have *you* deceived me? There is no faith in woman. *You* have wronged me, and honor is a jest. But, how dare *I* talk of *honor*, who have

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broken

broken all ties human and divine? Your unhappy husband is now suffering, while I (guilty wretch!) mock his despair. Leave me, Emily; *you* have made me what I am. Oh, no; I—I only am to blame; I have—oh, I am the worst of villains.” Having uttered these incoherent sentences, he again threw himself upon the sofa. Dreadful is conviction to the guilty mind; but the conviction of his own turpitude was not the only misery Cuthbert was doomed to experience. As one idea rapidly followed another, confusing his brain almost to madness, the dreadful thought occurred, that Emily, who could ridicule the anguish of a doating husband, might, when the novelty of her situation with him was past, equally insult his feelings by forming other connexions. This thought he wished to smother, as ungrateful to the woman who had sacrificed all to him; but his mind was too much agitated to form a connected chain of ideas. He still lay stretched upon the sofa, when the voice of Emily aroused him.

“ If,”

“ If,” said she, “ I am doomed to be miserable (and that my imprudence has deserved it, I own), could not my fate have been determined by other lips than yours ? Must the man, who bade me spurn the cold maxims imposed by a narrow-minded world, be the first to accuse me of my errors ?”

“ I blame you not, my Emily, dearest, most adorable of women ; I blame you not ; I—I alone am the cursed cause——”

“ Of our mutual happiness. Why, Cuthbert, this despair ? We may yet live in peace and competence. Dispose of these insignificant baubles ; let us seek another country ; let us leave care and useless retrospect in the foggy climate of England ; let us away to the warm and voluptuous skies of Italy ; there shall you bid defiance to the horrors that now weigh you down, and replace them by the soft cares of love.”

Cuthbert raised himself on his elbow.
“ And could you, my Emily, leave your native country for my sake ; for my sake consent to quit scenes of which you are the
greatest

greatest ornament? Oh, how do I deserve such happiness?"

He stretched out his hand towards her; she pressed it between both hers, and wetted it with her tears.

"Dispose of these baubles, once more I entreat you," said she, "and let us away."

He hastily rose, and seized the casket which contained the jewels; but, as suddenly throwing it from him, with horror, exclaimed, "By the labor of my hands can I support you, but not by the produce of these; I cannot, I will not make use of them. Let us fly, but let it be to deserts; let us hide ourselves from the face of man; let us wander in primæval wildness; but let us not eternally forfeit self-esteem."

"My love, my ardent affection," cried Emily, "is then nothing in your eyes? Why hesitate to use what is your own (for all that is mine is yours), when, by so doing, we may secure a future independence?"

"But

“ But what price shall we pay for that independence? No more of this; trifle not on so serious a subject; I am sure you jest. Restore the jewels to Colonel Meredith, share my poverty, and secure my eternal love.”

“ Share your poverty?” cried she; “ I can look poverty in the face with as steady a gaze as yourself; but why court the spectre to our side? No, we have the means of competence, let us secure it; I will myself dispose of these diamonds. The fool Meredith loves me too well to endeavour to recover them; and, had he the wish, he has not the power.”

“ How! how!” raved Cuthbert; “ can you, will you squander your husband’s lavish bounty on a ruined profligate? From this moment I swear never more to——”

“ Hold,” interrupted Emily; “ end not your oath; there is no need of that to prove how small your love to me.—Behold,” cried she, with a theatrical air, “ it is more merciful to end my existence at once, than suffer

fer me to linger a tardy victim to your cruelty."

She tore open her dress, and exposed her bosom. Cuthbert was vanquished, he fell at her feet, vowed implicit obedience to all her wishes; and fearing lest her despair might tempt her to some fatal act, he assumed an air of gaiety foreign to his heart, and endeavoured to persuade her that his anger was wholly levelled at himself.

Emily, with all the cunning attached to the character of a finished coquet, had easily developed the feelings of her lover. Reflection, she knew, must be carefully guarded against. To the tumultuous scenes of pleasure his mind had no propensity; nor did she wish much to expose herself to contempt, at places where she was formerly received with far different sensations. This shame arose from pride—not principle; she therefore resolved to put all her arts in practice to render home agreeable to Cuthbert. Her efforts were successful: sometimes grave, sometimes gay, but never licentious,

tious, she fascinated the unfortunate youth, and he endeavoured to bury all reflection on the past and consideration of the future, by the contemplation of present happiness. Although the love Emily bore Cuthbert was as great as was in her nature to feel, their souls had nothing in common. Art usurped the empire of hers, while that of Cuthbert owned all the influence of Nature: she was deeply read in the book of the world; he had never turned the page. Though cunning supplied the place of wisdom in Emily, her passions would sometimes betray her; this was the case relative to her elopement. The fine person of Cuthbert struck her fancy; she delighted in adoration, and in him found a worshipper. Profuse, not generous, she offered to part with her jewels to relieve his distresses; because at that moment she had a remaining partiality for him. Had she grown indifferent, or had a finer person struck her eye, she would have left him without pity; and
had

had want been his portion in consequence, no relief would have come from her.

Cuthbert did all in his power to avoid disposing of the jewels. He delayed it from day to day; at length he was obliged to break in upon his last fifty pounds: he paid a small sum, put the rest into his pocket, and left the house.

Emily awaited his return with impatience. Twelve and one o'clock struck: she was alarmed: at length, wearied with watching, she retired to bed, but not to rest. About four in the morning a gentle knock at the door announced his approach: Emily trembled, she knew not why; in a few minutes he entered the room. He took up the light which always burnt in the chimney, and approaching the bed, softly undrew the curtain.

"Sleep you, my Emily?" said he, in a low and tremulous voice.

"Do you think then, Cuthbert, there was a possibility, when I trembled for your safety?"

"Generous

"Generous woman! and do you not reproach me for the alarm I have caused you?"

"You shall never hear reproach from my lips, Cuthbert. May I inquire where you have been? but, if you wish to conceal it, I will forbear to ask."

"I have been," cried he, "where horror presides; yet I have brought comfort home. This purse, my Emily, contains notes to the amount of eight hundred pounds."

"Oh, heavens! Cuthbert, you have not been rash enough to—I speak not on account of the supposed crime, but of the dangers of detection. You have surely not been on the——"

She stopped short: Cuthbert was too much agitated by joy to comprehend her meaning.

"I left you, my Emily, with despair. I had a small sum in my pocket. I flew to a gaming-house near Leicester Fields. Fortune was my friend: I won twelve hundred pounds, but a sudden change of luck reduced

duced me to eight; unwilling to pursue a bad run, I left the house. Thank Heaven, there is now no need for parting with your ornaments."

"And did you," said she, "win all that money fairly?"

"How, Emily! can you suppose me guilty of fraud?"

"Dear me! don't feel hurt; it is what is practised every day."

"By the lowest of sharpers, perhaps, it may."

"Aye, and by the first ladies of the land. Do you think that Lady Fazakerly could sport three carriages, and keep a host of footmen, if it were not for the host of faro? She is a perfect Breslaw; and, indeed, to finish the education of a woman of fashion, it is as necessary to have a notion of shuffle and cut, as a presence of mind when detected in little peccadillos."

"And does not such a detection often take place?"

"Oh, yes, very often; but the person who could be uncivil enough to observe such

such a thing, would be voted a *bore* in all polite circles."

"But surely *you* never indulged in this fashionable plunder, this quality knavery?"

"Oh, no!—Sometimes, indeed, when hard run, I have made an *arrangement* with Lady Fazakerly; my aunt, you know, was to blame. She was left my guardian, and was the best judge of what I ought, and what I ought not to do."

Cuthbert sighed deeply; Emily had almost betrayed herself. He thought he perceived a depravity of heart, but he chased the idea from his mind. He recollected her tenderness towards him; and falsely argued himself into a conviction, that, if she had errors to others, he, who had received unequivocal proofs of her attachment, had no right to be her censor.

CHAP. VI.

—Would curses kill,
I would invent as bitter searching terms,
As curst, as harsh, as horrible to hear,
Deliver'd strongly through my fixed teeth,
With full as many signs of deadly hate,
As lean-fac'd Envy in her loathsome cave.

SHAKESPEAR.

FORESTER, though he interested himself greatly in the affairs of the Apsley family, did not so wholly devote himself to their service, as to neglect his own concerns. He once or twice visited Creswell, but received little satisfaction from the interviews. At length a letter was brought from Bond Street:

“SIR,

“I AM desired to inform you,
that in about a year's time (it being im-
possible

possible to be sooner, for many reasons) you will no longer have cause to complain of the want of a proper settlement. I suppose you will be grateful (at least, you ought to be) for the protection of your friends.

“ I am, sir,

“ Your very humble servant,

“ URIAH CRESWELL.”

“ Pall Mall.”

Forester did not feel himself quite so grateful as Creswell seemed to expect. He thought the delay unnecessary; yet as he could not ascertain the reasons for it (his guardian not being much used to assign any), he acquiesced, and resolved to trouble him no more with his visits. He now visited every public place, in order to discover the fugitives; but in vain. He walked the most frequented streets, but found no clue by which to trace them. Meredith gave orders that his elegant town-house should come to the hammer, and took the apartments Forester had quitted, in Bond Street;

Street; promising to send all letters directed to him at that place, to Lord Arrowsworth's.

One morning, as Forester was passing through Dover Street, ruminating on the uncertainty of his situation, a sudden scream roused him from his reverie. A fine child, in attempting to run across the street, had been knocked down by the pole of a carriage. The driver checked his horses with all possible speed; and Forester, rushing forwards, seized the boy, and carried him in his arms to his almost distracted mother: but she was in strong convulsions; and her shrieks brought every body to the windows. Forester congratulated himself on having saved a fellow creature's life; and was retiring from the crowd, when, at a drawing-room window, that reached from the ceiling to the floor, he beheld Mrs. Meredith. She slightly cast her eyes over the crowd, and turning away, Forester soon lost sight of her. The glimpse, however, was sufficient to prove her identity. He took the number,

number, and hastily walked to Bond Street. He was ushered up stairs. The room was empty; and he had an opportunity of reflecting what measures he was to pursue. He blamed his rashness in coming immediately to Meredith, and resolved to conceal his knowledge of his wife's abode.

. In a few moments the colonel made his appearance: he seemed to be in good spirits, and welcomed Forester with an unusual degree of cheerfulness. They conversed together for some time, when the servant appeared with breakfast. Forester expressed his surprise, as it was past two o'clock. Meredith, smiling, replied, that he had not been in bed till seven that morning. "I see no particular reason," added he, "that a man should mope and pine, because his wife has proved a jade. The case is common, that is one poor comfort. I am determined to brave the laugh of the world; and in order to prove how little I value Emily, I have taken a pretty warbling actress under my protection. But

why are you so silent ? Does this shock your tender conscience ? No, no ; I ought rather to ask, do you not applaud my spirit ?”

“ I will answer your question by another. Do you yourself think such conduct right ?”

“ Indisputably. It is the way with married men who get rid of their wives, to take some *chère amie* from a friend, or the public. I must not be out of fashion ; but I must get a divorce.”

“ You will be fashionable, then, again ? Yet, as *you* are situated, divorce is necessary. But how many make a traffic of their wives, and enjoy the price of their seduction ? It is sometimes convenient to have a faithless mate.”

“ The world,” said Meredith, “ can never attach that stigma upon me. My fortune is unencumbered. It must be known, that necessity in no degree influences my conduct.”

“ But will the world agree to attribute your behaviour to its real motive ? I know
the

the world too well : I know its propensity to draw erroneous conclusions from the best actions. The trade of divorce begins to be seen through. If the damages given by a jury to a husband, were appropriated to the use of the state, so as to act only as a punishment to the offender, the application for divorces would not be so frequent."

"What, then, am I to do? Put yourself in my situation. I am unwilling to expose my character to illiberal censure.—Guide—advise me."

"Obtain a dissolution of your marriage, and let Emily pursue her unbridled career. No longer your wife, her actions reflect no shame on you. Yet, if her conduct be such as to entitle her to your bounty; if, repenting her rash step, she solicit your assistance, generously allow her wherewithal to support life in exile, where she may weep the errors that have thrown her from the happiness once within her grasp."

"I will," said Meredith, after a pause.

“ I give you my honor that I will. I must now tell you, that at the same time she took her jewels ; on the day,” sighed he, “ that she left me, I found my escrutoire broke open, and bills and money taken out to the amount of fifteen hundred pounds.”

Forester was shocked at this additional proof of her turpitude ; but he exclaimed, with fervor, “ My life on the innocence of Cuthbert Apsley. He knew not of this infamous transaction. He may have been led into an error, but not into the commission of an act like this ; an act so degrading and infamous.”

“ I am indifferent as to that,” replied Meredith. “ Deceived by her in whom I most trusted, I believe honor to be a bubble created by the breath of knaves, as a mean of diverting the attention of the weak from a reflection on their designs. I shall give up all thoughts of injuring Apsley—but let him not insult me by his presence.”

“ You then engage to abandon the idea of injuring the offending party ?”

“ I do.”

"I do."

"Solemnly?"

"Solemnly."

"I will then inform you, that I this morning discovered the abode of the fugitives."

"Heavens and earth!" exclaimed Meredith; "where? where are they? My vengeance shall——"

"Hold, colonel! Did you not solemnly promise to abandon all idea of retribution?"

"I did; I own the charge: let them perish; let them——but you knew of their retreat before, and thus have trepanned me into a promise of——"

"Meredith," said Forester, "I charge you not to tempt me too far. I am willing to serve you; but if you once dare to accuse me of duplicity, I withdraw my assistance. I wish to save you from yourself. If your feelings can own the control of reason, hear me. I knew not, till this morning, of the retreat of your wife; nor will I now reveal it to you. Is this your boasted

indifference, to allow your passions the power of transporting you to transgress a sacred promise?"

"I will be calm," cried the colonel; "I will keep my oath. May all the miseries attendant on mortality be their lot! Forgive me, Forester."

He held out his hand, which was cordially accepted. Forester then proposed some terms which he meant to offer to Mrs. Meredith. The colonel agreed to all; and his friend, stepping to Lord Arrowsworth's, put the diamond ear-rings in his pocket, which Mrs. Thomas was accused of stealing. He took an early dinner, and, wrapped in a large box-coat, proceeded to Dover Street. He walked backwards and forwards for a quarter of an hour, ruminating on what he should say to his once valued friend, when the door of the house opening, Cuthbert sallied forth, muffling his face with his handkerchief. Glad to speak to Emily without witnesses, he gave a single knock at the door,

door, which was opened by a foot-boy. He eagerly inquired for Mrs. Meredith, but was informed that no such person lodged there. He asked if there were any lodgers at all? and was informed that a Mr. Apsley and his wife had taken the first floor. Forester desired to be shown to Mrs. Apsley, and was introduced to a handsome drawing-room, where, upon a sofa, dressed in all the elegance of fashion, sat the beautiful and guilty Emily. Confused at his sudden appearance, and at a loss how to construe the unexpected visit, she remained immovable. The foot-boy withdrew. Forester, with a cool bow, apologized for his intrusion, and hoped his coming had not alarmed her.

“ Alarmed me !” exclaimed Emily. “ Why, sir, should it alarm me? I am, surely, the properest judge of my own actions: nor can I see by what right you assume the office of my censor.”

“ Your ready guess at the motive that caused this visit,” cried Forester, “ con-

vinces me that you are not yet so far lost to shame, as to justify your criminality. Will you afford me half an hour's conversation? If after that you still persist in your unprincipled career, I shall, with regret, abandon you to the consequent miseries of unbridled profligacy."

Rage flashed from the eyes of the fair culprit. She threw herself into a chair, half choked with impotent fury. At length, rising, she said in a hurried manner, "Yes, I will hear you, that you may have the mortification to find all your rhetoric unavailing, and that I may have sufficient cause to estrange you for ever from my Cuthbert."

"If," said Forester, "he persist in his delusion, it will be no difficult matter. In that case, I must never see him more, and try to forget his virtues, once so promising; virtues, blighted and destroyed by you."

"Very well, sir; go on!" She calmly seated herself upon the sofa.

"Listen to the catalogue of your faults—
(to call them by no harsher term). I
should

should not mention these, if I did not mean to point out a way by which you might, in some measure, repair them."

"Very well, sir; go on." And taking her work-bag, she began to knot.

"I pass over my own injuries: those I have forgiven. But you have, in the most unprincipled manner, corrupted the heart of a once lovely and amiable girl.—Poor Cecilia! she deserved a better fate. She has, indeed, not forfeited her rank in society; but I fear it is because no gay rake of fashion thinks her faded form worth the trouble of seduction. Her mind once vitiated, the person is of little consequence."

"So, then, you really think me handsomer than Cecilia?" cried Emily, with a malignant smile. "Who would have expected a compliment from you?"

"Listen to me, madam. You have next betrayed the confidence of a husband who adored you: have falsified all the promises, the solemn promises of fidelity you pledged at the altar: broken your marriage-vow!"

“ And a very foolish, silly vow it was,” said she; “ and rash vows ought not to be binding. How much better all that stuff is managed in France! Who cares about marriage, or any thing else, contrary to their inclinations, in that happy, enlightened country? But I suppose you are come to preach about *love*, *honor*, and *obey*. I always knew you to be a great stickler for *religion*!”

The last word was uttered with a sneer, followed by a malicious laugh, by which she displayed her ivory teeth.

“ I confess the charge, madam,” said Forrester. “ I *am* the advocate of religion: of a religion that scepticism cannot undermine, or bigotry contract. In regard to the enlightened country you mention, I cannot think that its wild theories are at all calculated to render mankind wiser or better. But do not attempt to lead me from my subject. Your vows once broken, you had not the poor plea of yielding in a weak moment. Your scheme was deep laid; and *who* was the object? *You seduced a*
young

young man from the duty he owed his friends, his father, and himself: a young man, who, but for *you*, had been an ornament to his country, and a blessing to all around him."

"I cannot see any peculiar hardship in his case," cried Emily. "He is miserable, truly, in possessing the affections of a woman for whom half the town was running mad. There is not a man of his age, who would not think himself but too happy to be so distinguished."

Here she displayed her hands, pretending to look for the ball of cotton.

"Whether such a distinction," cried Forester, warmly, "be not the height of infamy, I shall not at present insist. But hear me to the end. I shall not long trouble you."

"Oh, very willingly! I was low-spirited when you came in, and you quite divert me."

"Think," said Forester, "of Apsley's feelings, when the dream of passion shall

cease ! Think of the reproaches to which he will subject you ! Think of the misery of his father ; a father who dotes on him ; who has fixed his hope in his son's integrity ; and who is now cursing the hour of his birth, in the bitterness of anguish ! Oh, Emily !—Mrs. Meredith ! think of his father, and release him from his thralldom."

Emily smiled. " Really you are an excellent painter," said she.

" Have you no compassion ? no sense of honor ? Is your mind become quite callous, because you have prostituted your person ?"

" This is rather too much, good sir," cried Emily, rising to ring the bell. " A little acrimony is vivifying, but I nauseate an excess."

Forester seized her hand, and seating her on the sofa, exclaimed, " You then persist in your connexion with my friend ?"

" I do." And she struggled violently to disengage herself.

" Have you no pity for others ?"

" e

“ He is to be *envied*, not *pitied*.”

“ If, then, you are firmly fixed, tremble for yourself. Do you know these ear-rings?” With these words he produced the shagreen case. All confidence now abandoned the beauteous criminal: the color forsook her lips; she heaved a deep sigh; looked round the room with unutterable anguish, and fainted on the sofa. Forester sprinkled her face and neck with water, which luckily stood on the table: he contemplated her beautiful inanimate form; and while he could not but pity her wretched situation, he mentally exclaimed, “ *To this does vice reduce her votaries!*” At length, animation returned, and Emily, looking around wildly, threw herself at the feet of her monitor, and shrieked, in the bitter accents of misery, “ Spare me! spare me! Take pity on a wretch who little deserves it.”

“ Where was your pity for others?” sternly demanded Forester. “ No, vile woman! it is now my turn to tyrannize. You shall expiate this crime by public exposure.”

posure. Our laws suffer not the meanest subject to be defamed. To the decision of those laws I leave you. What! you could, unmoved, behold the tears of a father; could retain a deserving youth in the chains of infamy; could brave the opinion of the world, by breaking your plighted faith; and can you not bear the additional shame of having reduced an innocent woman to misery?"

He then pretended to leave the room; but flying towards him, she seized the skirt of his coat, and again falling on her knees, frantically implored his clemency. "I can bear any opprobrium," exclaimed she, "attendant on my elopement. Some may pity me; but oh, for Heaven's sake, do not cover me with universal execration. I feel—I feel that I cannot survive this shock."

"You *can* feel, then!" said Forester, in a taunting voice, while his heart was bursting with pity. "You *can* feel! Wretched woman, it is too late! You, who had no mercy on others, can and ought not to expect any for yourself."

Yet,

"Yet, hear me, Reginald. I beg, I entreat you to hear me. You said you would point out a way by which I might repair the wrongs I have committed. Tell me, instantly tell me which way, that I may prove the extent of my repentance."

"The conditions I have to propose are harsh and grating; ill suited to one of your turn of mind; nor shall I repeat them. Why repeat what would meet with rejection? Your crimes be on your head!"

"I will, I will accept them: any, any conditions—were they ever so repugnant to my feelings, I will implicitly subscribe to them! Will you not hear? Oh, Heaven, take pity on me!"

She cast herself, wildly, on the floor. Forrester could hold no longer. He raised her from her abject posture, and casting his eyes upon her figure, which he had not yet trusted himself to do, he was shocked at the horror of her appearance. Her eyes were red, and swollen with weeping; her muslin robe was
rent

rent in several places; the feathers that adorned her head, were broken, and fallen on her shoulders; and the silver band that connected her hair, hung loosely at her back.

“Hear, then, my conditions,” cried Forester; “hear them with patience. I fear you will yet reject them. Once rejected, they will never more be offered.”

He then proposed that she should sign a paper, acquitting Mrs. Thomas of dishonesty; but that her shame might be concealed, it was to be reported that the earrings were mislaid in a private drawer of her bureau. She was likewise to confess her crime to the woman she had so much injured.

Emily listened in fullen silence. “Have you any more conditions?” said she: “these are hard, but I submit to them.”

Forester proceeded to inform her, that as she had, by her imprudence, forfeited all rank in society, she must be content to banish herself to some remote part of
the

the kingdom, or enter as a boarder in a convent abroad. "In either case," said he, "a small provision will be made for you; and should your future good-conduct deserve such indulgence, you may yet enjoy a state of affluence; for although his honor will never permit Colonel Meredith to receive you as his wife, he will not suffer you to be in want of any comfort he can bestow."

"And these are your conditions?" said she, with a contemptuous smile. "I despise both them and you. But I will see if I cannot yet outwit you." So saying, she hastily seized the ear-rings, which lay upon the table, and at the same time ringing the bell with a violence that snapped the cord, she shrieked aloud, "Save me! save me! help!"

Forester was thunderstruck. He ran towards her, and seizing her in his arms, attempted to wrench from her the precious case containing the ear-rings. At the same moment, the mistress of the house, alarmed by her cries, entered the room, followed by

two

two footmen, who immediately seizing Forester, confined his arms. "Away, sir," cried Emily. "Never again let me see your face! Vile, unprincipled man! out of my sight, and repent, if your heart be not callous, of your infamous conduct."

"What!" screamed Mrs. Rose (the mistress of the house), "a lady insulted, and a lodger of mine! What will the world come to? Call the watch: he shall be hanged as high as Haman!"

"Oh, no," cried Emily. "For Heaven's sake, let him go, madam. I would not have this a public affair: my reputation would suffer, at all events. Pray let him go; I beg, I entreat you."

With much persuasion Mrs. Rose was prevailed on to let Forester escape without punishment; when, as the sturdy footmen were going to convey him down stairs, a girl, opening the door of another apartment, begged leave to say a few words. She then related the whole circumstance of the tête-à-tête, and concluded by saying that Mrs. Meredith

Meredith was not the wife of the gentleman who lodged at the house. This was enough. Mrs. Rose, enraged that a person of bad character should defile her immaculate dwelling, soon changed the object of her abuse, and loaded the abandoned Emily with every opprobrious term her unbridled rage could suggest. But that wretched woman was insensible of the torrent of violence so liberally bestowed upon her : she sunk in a swoon from her chair, and in falling, the shagreen case, escaping from her pocket, rolled upon the floor. This Forester immediately secured, declaring it was the property of another, and desired Mrs. Rose to take it into her own possession. She willingly undertook the charge ; and in a short time Emily recovered her senses. Half unconscious of what had passed, she rolled her eyes, as if endeavouring to recollect : but when the idea of her exposure flashed upon her brain, she started from the floor, and fixing her haggard looks on Forester, she exclaimed, in a voice half smothered by emotion,

emotion, "You triumph, and I am undone. I ask no mercy: I expect none. Eternal curses on you! Yet think not, although I am humbled, but that some means may be found to repay the miseries I owe to your officious interference. You yet shall execrate the hour you first beheld me; not for the woes of others, but your own. I here vow, solemnly vow, never to let a day or hour pass, wherein I will not plan or execute some harm to your repose. I warn you; despise not my threats; and when an unexpected storm bursts on your head, think of me! For by all the pangs I feel, I swear to you eternal hatred."

She then flew to the other apartment, and locked the door. Forester listened. She muttered inarticulate curses. Still had he listened; but the voice of Mrs. Rose was too clamorous to allow any thing to be heard, but itself. The good woman expressed her uneasiness at such a wicked creature remaining in her house; but declared, that the next morning out she should

should tramp, bag and baggage, though she lost her rent by it. "And indeed, sir," said she to Forester, "by their behaviour, you would have suspected nothing amiss. The gentleman was rather *molancholish*, to be sure; but then he always seemed so happy when he was in company with the bad woman, that I no more thought harm of them, than of the child unborn."

Forester now took leave, begging Mrs. Rose to take particular care of the shagreen case; but she said, that as he knew the owner of it, it was just as safe in his own hands; and that, for her part, she should not give herself any farther trouble about a creature she so thoroughly despised.

CHAP. VII.

What had I to do with play? THE GAMESTER.

AGITATED by the scene he had undergone, Forester felt himself unable to revisit Colonel Meredith; he returned home, and found a note on his table: the hurried manner in which it was written prevented him from distinguishing the characters of Hartlebury.

“Rathbone Place.

“My dear Forester,

“COME to me immediately—never did I stand more in need of consolation than now—yet it is not from you that I expect it: I only wish you to take warning, a sad warning, from my mistaken conduct. I leave London, and perhaps England: should this letter not find you at home,

home, and I not see you, I beg you will accept the enclosed bills. Adieu. Receive my best wishes.

“ J. H.”

The bills were for five hundred pounds. Forester, alarmed, showed the note without hesitation to Lord Arrowsworth, who would have accompanied him to Rathbone Place, had he not reflected that Hartlebury might probably be offended at the intrusion; he, however, promised to be in readiness, should his appearance be any ways necessary; and attended by a servant, Forester left the house. It was past nine o'clock, and when he reached Rathbone Place a post-chaise and four drove rapidly by him: not attending to this circumstance, he walked hastily to his friend's lodgings, where he was informed that Hartlebury had just driven from the door. Forester, who well knew, from the rapidity of the vehicle, that to overtake it would be an impossibility, begged to speak to the mistress of the house.

She

She soon made her appearance : he inquired what particular circumstance had taken place relative to the sudden departure of his friend. She replied, that she knew nothing of Mr. Hartlebury's concerns ; that he seldom saw her but by accident : he generally kept late hours, but as he was a man of fashion and fortune, gave little trouble, had his own servants, and made regular payments, she put up with the inconvenience. " This morning, sir," said she, " his footman had a letter for him, but before I sent it up with the newspaper, I felt that it was full of bank notes : at least I thought so. Well, sir, in a short time the footman came tearing down stairs for dear life, calling for salts and hartshorn, for his master was taken ill. I ran up, and there indeed sat the poor gentleman on the ground as white as my cap. He told me he should soon be better, and desired his account to be instantly written out, for he believed he should leave London to-morrow. He ordered his servant to pack up with all possible

ble

ble speed, while he went out to discharge some small bills. The servant soon finished packing, and about an hour ago Mr. Hartlebury came back : when he saw that all was ready, he declared it was not worth while to delay ; sent for a post-chaise and four, and turned away without speaking, when I asked if he had not better wait till morning. He took his servant into the chaise with him, and whispering the postillions, drove off not a minute before you came to the door."

" Do you think, madam," said Forester, " that it was any pecuniary embarrassment that caused my friend's sudden departure ?"

" No, sir," replied she, " I'll take my oath it was not ; Mr. Hartlebury has lodged at my house, off and on, these fifteen years ; besides, the letter he received was full of money, and he has left fifty pounds in my hands for fear he may have forgotten any trifling bill."

" Strange ! Did he not write a letter this

morning? I received one from him dated at this house."

"Perhaps, sir, he may have written that at a coffee-house; he was too much flurried to write at first; I believe, if the fact were known, he is privately married."

The good woman put her finger to her nose with a mysterious air. Forester, in spite of his chagrin, could not but smile at the idea of Hartlebury becoming a Benedick. "Did he leave no letter for me?" demanded he.

"Oh dear me!" cried the woman, "now I recollect (for I am quite spificated, as it were), he did say something about a letter on his table—Sarah, run up stairs quick, that's a good girl, and see if there is any thing there."

The girl obeyed, and her mistress taking a paper from her on her return, looked at the address, and said, "If your name is Forester, sir, this letter is for you."—He thanked her, and taking leave gave her his address, begging her to give him early intelligence when

when any tidings arrived of her lodger. When he reached Lord Arrowsworth's, Forester found that nobleman tête-à-tête with his lady, and entreated to open the letter in their presence. This is Lordship opposed, as Lady Arrowsworth might be too much affected ; her will, however, was a law ; she insisted upon being a witness ; and Forester, with a trembling hand, broke the seal.

“ Rathbone Place.

“ My dear young Friend,

“ I AM at this moment waiting for the chaise that will convey me far from the metropolis ; yet I cannot leave it without imparting the reasons of so precipitate a retreat. I owe the confession to you, for I have loved you as a father, and I should ill discharge my assumed duty, did I not warn you from the dangerous rock on which my peace of mind is wrecked. You remember the manner in which I used to bestow the amount of my profits at the

gaming-table ; you remember the praises you lavished on my conduct—I thought I deserved them, but I was mistaken. It is an incontrovertible truth, that no end will justify unworthy means—Do you doubt my assertion ? Listen to me, and tremble at your scepticism.

“ A few days ago I attended a select party at Lord Elving’s—a party met for the purposes of play : bets ran high, and a young man of the name of Baynton was a considerable loser ; I found that he had lately succeeded to a large estate ; I won of him five hundred pounds by the turn of a card, and he was a considerable loser to others. I knew debts of honor to be sacred, and pleased myself with the idea of liberating some honest debtor from the horrors of a prison, and expending the money squandered at a gaming-table in uses foreign to the intention of the losers. This morning the bills were sent me, with a note dated the day before, apologizing for the delay. I had scarce read it, when my eye
glancing

glancing upon a newspaper, I found that the unfortunate youth whose money I had won had yesterday put a period to his existence, owing, as it was surmised, to immense losses at play.

“ I was almost overpowered by the acuteness of my feelings ; my servant was fortunately in the room, and I soon recovered my presence of mind : I at once saw my folly, and not only saw, but resolved to repair it. Let the fashionable world say what it will, I feel that I am accessory to the death of the unfortunate Baynton. Good heavens ! may I not have reduced as many to despair as I have rescued from it ? I allow, some profligates ought to suffer, but am *I* to inflict the punishment ? From this moment I resolve to abandon a vice I always despised ; I will never more touch card or die, but will divest myself of superfluities, that I may pursue the feelings of my heart in a manner the most rigid moralist may approve. Forester, I know you detest play ; but beware, take a caution

from the example of your nearest friends; a weak moment may lead you into errors which the repentance of an age will scarcely obliterate; remember that gaming is the germ of vice, and if once implanted will strike so deep, that reason and philosophy will be incompetent wholly to eradicate its baneful effects. Heaven preserve you from the shock that has cured me of my folly, by tearing my bosom with remorse. I sent you this morning the amount of my winnings—dispose of it as you please—it is literally the price of blood; I know you will appropriate no part of it to your own use, though I could wish it; I must, therefore, beg you to be my almoner. Adieu, my dear Forester; pity, and continue, if possible, to think well of,

“ Your devoted friend,

“ JAMES HARTLEBURY.”

Lady Arrowsworth wept while Forester read the letter; but his Lordship, vexed at the emotion she betrayed, which he deemed

deemed prejudicial to her health, openly declared his disapprobation of the writer.

"I always," said he, "thought Hartlebury a man of principle; I knew he gamed to a small degree, but never that he made it a practice."

"I still think him," replied Forester warmly, "and ever shall think him a man of the most unshaken integrity: his principles spring from the heart, and are not dependent on that false philosophy which is learned by rote, and detailed with a disgusting pedantry: if he finds himself betrayed into the maze of error, he instantly and carefully retraces his steps—he is liable to mistake, but amendment follows conviction."

"If," said Lord Arrowsworth, "a man's principles are not fixed at fifty, I fear it is too late to hope amendment."

"The principles of Mr. Hartlebury, my Lord, have never varied, though the means by which he reduces them to practice may—benevolence is his characteristic,

and he has only to reproach himself that this sentiment has carried him rather too far."

"Too far, indeed," said his Lordship; "but why had he not sufficient strength of mind to discover the turpitude of gaming before? It has been, by his own confession, a practice of many years."

"Because so dreadful an example as related in his letter never before occurred to his knowledge, at least did not appeal so forcibly to his feelings."

Forester, in his defence of Hartlebury, almost forgot the deference which he had been used to pay to the opinion of Lord Arrowsworth, who seemed rather hurt at what he termed a vindication of weakness. This deference, however, was not such as is exacted by the proud, and paid by the mean—it was the deference of genuine respect and esteem. He therefore did all in his power to exculpate Hartlebury, and succeeded so well, that Lord Arrowsworth consented to
acknow-

acknowledge his many virtues, and forgive his error in favor of the motive.

When Forester retired to his apartment, he sat down to meditate on the letter of his friend; never had his ideas been so truly perplexing; he remembered, that not a long time before his heart had warmly applauded the conduct he now was obliged to condemn; and he was astonished that the conviction of its error had not struck him in the first instance. Vice and virtue may appear so closely connected, that, unless great care be taken to draw the line, the deformity of the one may be totally veiled by the lustre of the other; it is not sufficient that a motive be good; the means to which it gives birth must likewise be unexceptionable: who, to serve an oppressed individual, ought to commit an act of atrocity by which many may be sufferers? Hartlebury had said truly, he was the destroyer of the unfortunate Baynton. It is true, it was an act of free-will on the part of the young man; but did any friendly Mentor

warn him from the snare? If, instead of contributing to his losses, Hartlebury had kindly pointed out the danger—if, instead of winning for the sake of others, he had preserved a fellow-creature equally deserving his compassion, then had he shown himself the friend of humanity and the champion of benevolence. But the soothing idea of relieving distress blinded Hartlebury to the misery he often caused; and not properly discriminating between the gamester by profession and the gamester by delusion, he thought them but one class, and turned their follies to the advantage of others. Though late, he was convinced of the impropriety of his conduct, and with a resolution that did honor to his feelings abjured his error; satisfied that no motive whatsoever can exculpate the gamester, who is either a prey to misery himself, or the cause of it in another.

The next morning Forester waited upon Meredith; he was admitted to his chamber, where he found him at breakfast in bed.

—"Well, what news?" cried he, "from my dear better half—will she quietly pack off?—Faith, I am glad I have got rid of her—two months matrimony is enough for any reasonable man."

Forester was hurt at his levity, yet glad to see him calm. Instead of giving a direct answer, he inquired after his health, fearing, by his unusual mode of breakfasting, that indisposition was the cause.—Meredith replied, that it was mere laziness. "I have of late," said he, "kept it up pretty decently; if I were to have a sleepless night I should be ready to hang myself the next day, for my reflections are not of the most agreeable cast: I take, however, the best method to prevent it, as I seldom now go to bed till the sober mechanic opens his shop."

"And how do you pass the night?"

"Why, faith, I can hardly tell you; wine, however, makes it glide away imperceptibly; and provided I can but escape melancholy, I care not what means I employ."

“ I thought you mentioned a warbling favorite,” said Forester. “ Of two evils I would prefer the less, and surely the conversation of any woman is preferable to drunken debauch.”

“ As for my wife’s successor,” replied Meredith, “ she must seek an opportunity of breaking with her present protector; he has certainly behaved generously towards her, but I have two thousand a year more than he.”

“ And do you not imagine, that some have the same advantage over you?”

“ Certainly; and I suppose if a better situation offer she will play me the same trick she is now playing Lord Alsmere.”

“ And you would not feel more on the occasion than you now express?”

“ Why, I don’t know. Men of fashion are more vexed at the infidelity of a mistress than a wife; the one is a debt of honor—the other a bill to a tradesman—we pay the most scrupulous attention to the former, though we know that more real duty

duty is attached to the latter. But I think I should e'en let it pass, and if my mistress sought another protector, I would seek another mistress."

"Meredith," said Forester gravely, "I hitherto thought you a man of feeling—a man of principle."

"And pray, my grave censor," cried Meredith, half angry, "what now makes you think me otherwise?—But let us dismiss the subject—better talk of disagreeable matters, than quarrel about trifles. Have you seen my wife?"

"I have."

"What is her determination? Will she be supported by me, or will she pursue her career of folly?"

"She seems in the high road to ruin; I fear she will attempt to injure you, me, and all who know her: her present paramour will be the next victim."

"May you prove a prophet!" exclaimed Meredith; "and in that case, let the sky
rain

rain plagues upon me if I would not take him by the hand."

He then begged Forester to relate the particulars of the interview—was half suffocated with laughter when he heard of her art to gain the case of jewels; but at length more seriously declared, that, were she to plead her own cause, she should find him adamant, and that his heart abandoned its last lingering love for her. Notwithstanding this profession of indifference, it was easy to perceive that Meredith had something in his mind that he did not choose to avow even to himself.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Does not the hand of Righteousness afflict thee?
And who shall plead against it? Who shall say
To Pow'r Almighty, Thou hast done enough?

ROWE.

THE feelings of Forester upon his return to St. James's Square were such as to unfit him for company; and as a large party were expected to dine with Lord Arrowsworth, he complained of a head-ach, and requested to take his repast alone. Lady Arrowsworth, who was greatly attached to Forester, rallied him sharply upon his melancholy; she assured him, that if he were pining for any disdainful beauty, she would become his advocate, and paint the irresistible charms of his lengthened visage in such natural colors, as to melt even the hardest heart.

Forester, smiling, said, that he could not wish for a fairer advocate, were he in want
of

of any assistance of that nature; but persisted with truth in declaring that he was unfit for company. — Lady Arrowsworth then left him, with the assurance, that although she excused his appearance at dinner, she must insist upon his making one at her casino party in the evening. When alone, Forester revolved in his mind what method he had best pursue in regard to the Apsleys. Should he himself see Cuthbert, or should he acquaint his father with his retreat? If he pursued the former plan, he might lay himself open to the malice of Emily, who would doubtless do her utmost to incense her deluded lover against him: if the latter, Mr. Apsley's health, weakened by misfortune, might sink under the shock. After deliberating some time, he resolved to expose himself to any scene, however trying, rather than suffer a worthy man to become the victim of his feelings. He snatched an early and hasty dinner, and sending a servant to acquaint Lady Arrowsworth that he would do himself the honor

honor of attending her in the evening, went in search of his deluded friend. He soon reached Dover Street; a maid servant opened the door; he inquired for Mr. Apsley, and was informed that he had left the house, and that the lady had gone away a few hours before him. While this discourse was carrying on in the passage, Mrs. Rose, putting her head out of the parlour-door, begged him to walk in, for she had a great many things to tell him. He obeyed; and no sooner was he seated, than her tongue, impatient of restraint, took a free course.

“ Ah, sir !” said she, “ fine doings since yesterday ! Poor young gentleman ! I declare my heart bleeds for him : but then what could he expect when he followed such wicked courses ? He came home at twelve o’clock last night, and you may be sure I rated him soundly for having brought his kept madams here—there never was any house more respectable than mine—but he swore bitterly she was his wife. I told him
that

that was neither here nor there ; but that folks who tell one falsity will tell fifty to support it. I did not spare him, I assure you. He bounced and flounced as if he would pull my cap off, and swore again, that nobody should seduce—I mean traduce the lady. Up stairs he went, and I soon heard them engaged in a violent dispute. I crept to the door, but heard nothing more than a word or two. Mr. Apsley once said, in a loud voice, ‘ No ! never can I lift my hand against him : ’ and I heard her twice or thrice call him spiritless coward, and a number of hard names besides. I was afraid of being discovered, and so left my post. This morning, at eight o’clock, Mr. Apsley came down stairs, and informed me that he was going to seek lodgings elsewhere. He had not been gone long before madam rang the bell, paid my bill, and ordered a hackney coach : her trunks were placed in it, and she told my girl she was going to her new lodgings. I could not imagine how she should know where they were ;

were; but I was glad enough to get rid of her. Off she set, and about an hour ago the young gentleman returned. He looked very much fatigued, and although I was very angry with him (as well I might), I civilly desired him to walk into the parlour. He asked me the amount of my bill; but when I informed him it was paid, and the lady gone—oh gemini! had you but seen his face!—all his fine rosy color faded, and I thought he would have dropped on the floor; but when I said she had taken all the baggage, he cried out, ‘She has then robbed me, but I deserve it; and yet Emily to leave me nothing! it is hard! too hard! but I shall soon find a remedy.’—Then snatching up his hat, he flew off like a cannon shot.”

“Good heavens,” exclaimed Forester, in an agony, “he surely meditates suicide; perhaps it may not yet be too late to save him.”

He hastily rose, but how to trace the wanderer? He in a moment was convinced

ced that all perquisition must be fruitless. He again addressed Mrs. Rose, and begged to know the number of the coach in which Emily had left the house. She had forgotten; the maid was called: she confessed that she never had learned to read. Despairing of tracing the steps of the fugitive, Forester was compelled to leave the house; and after passing a tormenting evening, with a tiresome fashionable party, he retired to his room. But his rest was broken; his dreams presented images of horror; he beheld his friend the self-immolated victim to the arts of a wretch disgracing the name of woman. Glad was he when the morning dawned; he started from his uneasy pillow, and after reading a part of the Deserted Village, and taking an uncomfortable breakfast, he proceeded to Swallow Street, where Mr. Apsey and his family were in lodgings.

This unhappy father was a martyr to the gout; his feet were wrapt in flannel, and he was supported in his chair by pillows.

Miss

Miss M'Allister and her maid were working a small carpet; and Sinclair was reading the newspaper. The whole family received Forester with cordiality; and Mr. Apsley anxiously inquired if he had heard any news of Cuthbert. "Should the account be contrary to my hopes," said he, "I beg you not to keep it from me; every torment is less afflictive than uncertainty."

"Do not afflict yourself, brother-in-law," said Miss M'Allister, "about a youth who has disgraced his family. He was named after my relation, Sir Hildebrand Cuthbert, Baronet; that worthy man would blush in his grave, could he know the profligacy of his god-son."

"For Heaven's sake, madam," said Mr. Apsley, "have compassion on him and me."

"No," exclaimed Miss M'Allister, in a pompous tone, "though the sky fall—let justice be done!"

"I fear, madam," said Forester, "my unfortunate friend has received the punishment

ment of his folly from the very person who seduced him to error."

He then related the facts, softening, as much as possible, the conclusion. Mr. Apsley seemed not to have an idea that his son had committed suicide; and soon after, the conversation becoming more general, Sinclair was desired by his aunt to finish reading the newspaper. He took it up, and read some of the advertisements, by which 'quacks boast of a patent to destroy the health of the dupes who resort to them. These he read in a manner so peculiarly humorous, that Forester was with difficulty enabled to retain his gravity; and even Mr. Apsley's features relaxed into a smile. Not so Miss M'Allister—she sat listening with eager attention, often approving, but oftener condemning. She was in the midst of a dissertation on the properties of mustard-seed, when Sinclair, uttering a loud scream, exclaimed, "Oh God!" and put his hand to his head.—Forester sprang towards him, and inquired what was the matter.

ter.—“ I have something in my eye,” said Sinclair; and darted out of the room, beckoning Forester to follow. He ran up to his bedchamber, and when his pursuer had entered the room, he double-locked the door.—Forester again eagerly inquired what was the occasion of his alarm.—“ Read! read!” said Sinclair, in a voice half extinct by emotion.

With a trembling hand Forester unfolded the paper; but horror superseded every other sensation, when he read the following paragraph:

“ Yesterday afternoon, as a man and woman were passing the bridge in Hyde Park, they discovered a gentleman floating on the water; they instantly went for proper assistance, and the body being carried to the — inn, every method was taken, but ineffectually, to restore animation. The gentleman was dressed in a blue coat, white waistcoat, white leathern pantaloons, and half-boots; his hair was of a light color, and tied in a queue. He had no money about him,

him, but a handsome gold watch and seal were found in his fob. He now lies at the — inn to be owned. The coroner's inquest has not yet brought in a verdict."

The agony of Forester was such as to preclude articulation. He gazed at Sinclair with a look of vacancy; tears slowly flowed down his cheek, and had not Nature found that relief, the consequence of his feelings had been probably fatal. He was aroused from his torpor by the voice of Miss M'Allister, who begged them to open the door, as she had procured some excellent eye-water.

Sinclair assured her there was no need of any; he begged her to walk down stairs, and said that he would follow her in a minute. He then, with more than common earnestness, requested Forester to descend, and assume, if possible, a cheerful countenance; they would then proceed to the inn in order to give proper directions for the interment of the unfortunate Cuthbert.

Forester,

Forester, with a slow step and heavy heart, entered the parlour; Sinclair silently followed him: their altered countenances struck the inquiring eye of Mr. Apsley.

He started; and in a hurried voice said, "Tell me what has happened; is my Cuthbert dead?"

"Oh, my poor father!" exclaimed Sinclair; and burst into tears.

"God's will be done," said Mr. Apsley, bowing his head.

The grief of Miss M'Allister and her maid was more clamorous: the former, in lamenting his death, forgot his misconduct; and would with joy have received him into favor, now her favor could no longer benefit.

"Alas!" said she, sobbing, "he was the best of youths; and I loved him most sincerely. We must say nothing but good of the dead; and I am sure he has not left his equal in the kingdom. His cousin, Sir Gilbert Potheringham, would have left him his immense property, but I am well

convinced that poor dear Cuthbert loved virtue better than money; and it is some comfort to think he is in a better place."

Forester was busied in attending on Mr. Apsley. He earnestly requested him to take comfort; and, for the sake of his own health, to avoid an immoderate indulgence of grief.

Mr. Apsley looked up. "Yes, sir," said he, "I will follow your counsel; I am not the only father who has to curse the allurements of gaming, or the arts of women! Rest in peace, my Cuthbert; I reproach not thee—but myself. I ought to have guarded thee against the snare; but to render thy mind philanthropic, I painted the world in flattering colors. Oh, fatal error!—but go, sir, if I may ask it, and claim the body of my wretched boy; let it be transported to Apsley House. I feel that I cannot bear to contemplate the wreck of my hopes."

Forester, charmed at his composure, readily

dily acquiesced; and Sinclair urged the necessity of his attendance.

Decency, he said, required that he should pay the last duties to his brother. After a few denials he gained his point, and both went in a hackney-coach to the — inn.

A crowd of people were near the door, but guessing at the business of the newcomers, they made a lane to let them pass.

“That must be a relation,” said one; “see how his eyes are swelled with crying.”

“Aye, aye,” said another, “it’s a bitter bad job when folks make away with themselves.”

Forester dragged Sinclair along; he demanded to see the body. A maid servant, trembling, led the way with a candle to a dark cellar, and after passing through two small vaults where faggots were kept for firing, she opened a door, where the corpse lay extended upon the table. Setting down the light, she begged to be excused from going into the place with them. Forester,

willing to spare her the scene, begged her to be gone; and she needed no second entreaty. The vault was cold and comfortless, the bricks were green with damp, and Sinclair felt his heart appalled by visionary terrors. The feeble glimmer of the single rushlight was just sufficient to make the darkness visible; and as the gleam fell upon the sheet with which the corpse was covered, he almost fancied he saw it move. His trembling knees no longer could sustain the weight of his body, and he would have sunk on the ground, had he not leaned against Forester. He felt ashamed of his weakness, and endeavoured to shake it off; but his endeavours were vain. He quitted the support of his friend, and fell with a groan to the earth.

“Oh, Emily,” exclaimed Forester; “vile woman! behold thy work! one brother lies a victim to thy arts, the other bewails his loss in the bitterness of affliction; a father is bending under the weight of misery, of which thou art the cause; a friend laments
the

the blight of thy victim's opening virtues : and shall not retribution take place ? Yes, vile, unprincipled wretch, it will, it must, it shall !”

He raised Sinclair from the floor : his pallid countenance sufficiently testified his sufferings ; but when Forester advanced his hand to remove the sheet, he, by an effort of resolution, snatched the light, and begged that that office might be his. Forester submitted : Sinclair, with a quivering lip, advanced, and drew the covering from the face of the corpse. He gazed at it earnestly ; at length, with a loud shriek, he cried, “ Oh, Forester !—it is—it is—oh heavens ! it is—not my brother !”—Forester quickly advanced, and found that his companion was not deceived : he clasped his hands in transport : the youth who lay before them was not Cuthbert. Both immediately quitted the vault. Sinclair, mad with joy, changed five guineas at the bar, and flinging the silver among the crowd, “ There, you dogs,” cried he, “ drink, drink,

drink, and be as happy as I am, if you are able. If a single one of you be sober by this time two hours, I wish he may get beaten by his wife, or nabb'd by a rascally bailiff."

As the coach drove back to Swallow Street, Forester pointed out the necessity of caution in regard to Mr. Apsley, who, firmly persuaded of his son's death, was resigned; but though he was competent to encounter sorrow, he might not with similar equanimity bear the rush of joy. It was agreed that Forester should break the matter to him by degrees. The coach stopped.—Miss M'Allister and Kitty were standing at the window: the altered countenance of the gentlemen was sufficient to prove their fears groundless. Sinclair smiled at his aunt, who immediately ran from her post. Forester blamed him for precipitation; but his companion swore he could as soon fly without wings as look grave. When they entered the parlour, they found Mr. Apsley had sunk on his knees, for which

his

his sister-in-law was reproaching him, and demonstrating that nothing was worse for the gout than exertion.

Mr. Apsley, rising with difficulty, thanked Forester for the trouble he had taken on his account.

“ I know not, sir,” said he, “ how to express the gratitude and admiration I feel! That a young man of the present day should place his chief delight in acts of philanthropy, is to me surprising—at least it is so now. I once flattered myself that Cuthbert possessed a feeling heart—the soothing dream is at an end: and yet, though deceived in him, let me not wrong the world—there may be—there are minds exalted as your own—though I confess they have not come within the reach of my observation.”

“ I hope, father,” said Sinclair (who felt rather hurt at this speech), “ that you except the company present.”

“ I meant not to hurt you, Sinclair,” replied the father: “ yes, my boy, you

possess an excellent heart; I glory in it. Forgive the querulous tone, prompted by misfortune. Your good conduct shall repay me for the dereliction of your brother."

"Upon the article of good conduct," replied Sinclair, "I fear I had better be silent: as to my brother, we will find him out, and you shall confess, sir, that a single temporary folly will not obliterate his many virtues."

"I admire your brotherly love," said Mr. Apfley; "Cuthbert indeed had many excellent qualities."

"He has been seduced by passion," said Forester; "but reason will soon resume her empire."

"Though he seldom hunted," cried Sinclair, "I never knew a better horseman; he sat as tight as a part of the saddle!"

"Indeed," observed Miss M'Allister, "the misguided youth had an excellent notion of painting; and in my botanical folio,

folio, the Flos Adonis and the Strelitzia Regina are happy specimens of his talents."

The conversation, which began but little in favor of Cuthbert, ended highly the reverse. Forester promised to exert all his powers to discover his retreat, and left Mr. Apsley more calm than he had been for some time. Upon his arrival at Lord Arrowsworth's, not finding any of the family at home, Forester retired to his chamber, ruminating upon the scene he had just quitted, and lamenting the delusion which had so fatally clouded the mental energies of Cuthbert; but when he reflected on the irresistible incentives presented by pleasure to fascinate the inexperienced, he could not but consider him more as an object of pity than condemnation. This train of ideas suggested to him the following lines, wherein he endeavoured to display the fallacious arguments which sophistry too often makes use of to lure the unwary from the paths of virtue.

FAVOR'D mortals, blooming youth,
Listen to the voice of truth!
Spurn the solemn sage's theme—
Life itself is but a dream.
Now, while youth and health are ours,
Let us cull life's choicest flowers;
Sip their sweets, and, while 'tis May,
Bear the honey'd prize away.
What are wisdom, pomp, and pow'r?—
Phantoms of the fleeting hour.
What is glory but a ray,
Dazzling only to betray?
Throng'd with danger is the road
Leading to her steep abode;
And when spent with toil and pain,
Haply you the summit gain,
Calumny, foul fiend of spite,
Hurls you headlong from the height.
Mortals, then no longer stray
Through life's rough and thorny way,
But in pleasure's halcyon bow'rs
Wear away the laughing hours.
Beauty there maintains her court;
There the Loves and Graces sport—
Ever ready to bestow
Joys which only youth can know.
Winter never chills the plain—
Milder seasons solely reign—
Smiling Spring, with roses crown'd,
Scatters fragrant odors round;

Summer

Summer spreads her fruitful store,
Brought from many a distant shore;
And, to fire the raptur'd soul,
Autumn fills the golden bowl.—
Now, in notes of softest sound,
Swell melodious airs around;
Now enchanting nymphs advance,
Mingling in the mazy dance:
Where they bend their easy way,
Sportive Cupids round them play;
And with wanton smiles invite
To the bow'rs of soft delight,
Where, on rosy beds reclin'd;
Lull'd to rest, the vacant mind,
Free from worldly care and woes,
Sinks supinely to repose.—
Mortals, then no longer stray
Through life's rough and thorny way,
But in pleasure's blissful bow'rs
Pass in endless joy your hours.

CHAP. IX.

And yet this tough impracticable heart
Is govern'd by a dainty-finger'd girl:
Such flaws are found in the most worthy natures!
A toying, whining, wheedling, whimp'ring she,
Will make him amble on a gossip's message,
And take the distaff with a hand as patient
As e'er did Hercules. ROWE.

THE next morning, at breakfast, a note was put into the hands of Forester: he hastily opened it.

“ You are a villain—a mean hypocritical villain—who, under the mask of friendship, have played upon my credulity. If you are not a poltroon also, meet me 'to-morrow morning at seven o'clock, by the second mile-stone on the Hampstead road, from which place we will adjourn to a field, whence one of us must

must never more return. I shall bring my pistols with me.

“ PHILIP MEREDITH.

“ Bond Street,

“ Tuesday morn.”

Forester plainly perceived the cause of Meredith's outrageous epistle. He beheld a gulf unexpectedly opening at his feet, and cursed the hour he had ever undertaken the part of a mediator. The words villain and poltroon for a moment robbed him of reflection, and he panted to exterminate the man who had dared to brand his fair fame with dishonor; but cooler ideas soon took place of rage: he well knew the arts of Emily; she had vowed the destruction of his repose, and he doubted not but that she had told too specious a tale to be detected without infinite care. He feared his temper possessed not sufficient forbearance to disarm reproach by reason; yet he was resolved not to lift his hand against Meredith, till self-defence might

might authorize the measure. Prudence suggested to him the necessity of concealing the menacing billet from his patron.—Hartlebury had informed him of his Lordship's rigid notions in regard to affairs (falsely termed) of honor: in his opinion, nothing but blood would be competent to wash the stain away. How much did Forrester wish for the presence of Hartlebury! in him alone he could confide the dearest secrets of his heart; in him he could find a friend, and a man of the world—characters seldom found united in one person. He determined, at length, to meet Meredith on the morrow, but to go unarmed; by this, he would manifest his own innocence, and show a confidence in his challenger. Satisfied with this arrangement, he met Lord and Lady Arrowworth at table with a smiling countenance, and informed them that he had planned a little excursion with Colonel Meredith on the morrow. Her Ladyship wished him an agreeable ride, and the conversation became

became general. But another surprise awaited Forester. Dinner was scarce over, when a servant informed him that a gentleman, upon particular business, wished to speak to him in the drawing-room.—He concluded him to be Meredith, and hastily obeyed the summons. To his utter surprise, he beheld a stranger in the habit of a clergyman. He slightly bowed.

“ You are Mr. Forester, I presume,” said the gentleman.

“ I am, sir. Have you any particular business with me ?”

“ I have, sir. I wait upon you at the request of a penitent sinner, whose mortal career is ended. May her soul rest in peace !”

He devoutly crossed himself.

“ How, sir ! Is Mrs. Meredith no more ?”

“ No, sir ; I speak of Mrs. Ann Phillips, who, finding herself on the point of death, made an ample confession of many
enor-

enormities; some of which relate to you. As my duty obliges me to receive the confessions of the penitent, so does it oblige me to exhort them to repair the evil they have done; without which, though of the Romish persuasion, I conceive confession to be of little avail. She, therefore, before her death, signed this paper, as bound in justice; and for this act, may her soul find mercy above."

He put a folded paper into Forester's hands: it was to the following purport:

"The Confession of ANN PHILLIPS.

"I HAVE been guilty of many crimes, but hope this confession, and my sincere penitence, may, in some degree, atone for them. I have much injured Lady Winterfield, Mr. Forester, and one of my fellow-servants. I have sinned greatly; but these deeds lie heaviest on my heart. One morning, Mrs. Meredith, then Miss Emily Burgess, called me into her room. (I was the waiting-maid of her aunt, Lady Fazakerly.)

She

She asked me if I would undertake a long journey, for which she would amply reward me? I said that I would do every thing I could to serve her. She drew a letter from her pocket, and said she would not make a half confidante of me. 'I wish,' added she, 'to cause a breach between Mr. Hartlebury and Mr. Forester. If I can succeed, I shall incense all that young fellow's friends against him, and break off a connexion of a tender nature, between him and Cecilia Fitzhubert (now Lady Winterfield). I cannot bear that he should be happy. I know, by his last letter to Cecilia, that he is at Amsterdam. Phillips, you must cross over to Holland, and put this letter in the post.' She then showed me two letters, and asked me if I knew one hand-writing from the other? I replied that I did not. 'I am confident you cannot,' said she, 'for I have imitated the hand to a nicety.' The letter was directed to James Hartlebury, Esq. at Messrs. Tenhove and Verheyen's, Hamburgh. Miss Burges gave

gave me thirty guineas, and I (telling Lady Fazakerly that my sister was dying in the country) soon reached Amsterdam. I only put the letter in the post-office, and returned immediately. It was well I did; for in a week's time, the French army were in the country, and there was no passage to be procured to England, but by a very round-about way. When I returned, Miss Burges's praised me for my diligence, but made me take a most tremendous oath never to reveal what had passed. She vowed, besides, that if I should let it escape me, she would take proper methods to stop my information. I really think she meant, by putting an end to my life. Fear, and fear only, prevented my discovering the whole to Miss Fitzhubert, who, soon after, was no longer attached to Mr. Forester, but always ridiculed him to every body. Besides this, Miss Burges used to make me mix different ingredients in the rouge Miss Fitzhubert used, after she came from Miss Harlebury's. These, she told me, were calculated

culated to burn the skin, and render her not quite so lovely as she had the vanity to suppose. Indeed, she said true; for the poor young lady soon lost her beautiful bloom, and was forced to supply its place by white paint. I believe, firmly, that for a quarter of a year before she married, she had not once shown her natural face. I could not have borne this; but I was altogether in Miss Burgess's power. Yet I might have ruined her in one instance: but she had so much art, that I feared to expose her. She would doubtless have made me appear the guilty person. Some years before the fact I have mentioned, Miss Burgess wanted money for the faro table, and made me pawn a pair of diamond earrings: she did not get above a third of the value, and was never able to redeem them. When Lady Fazakerly inquired why she did not wear her jewels? she said they were missing, and accused her own maid, Mrs. Thomas, of the theft. The poor woman was turned away without wages or character, and

and I was wicked enough to suffer it. I have since heard she died of want in the streets. I hope this confession may be the means of the repose of my sinful soul.—Amen.

“ANN PHILLIPS.

“Attested by JAMES BUTLER, to be the confession of Mrs. Ann Phillips, as written by him from her own mouth.”

“This paper, sir,” said Forester, “acquaints me with little but what I before knew. I always attributed the forged letter to Mrs. Meredith. The affair of the earrings has long been elucidated. Yet I cannot but wonder at the surprising manner in which the fraud has come to light.”

“May fraud ever come to light!” said the priest, clasping his hands with an air of devotion.

“Ah, sir,” said Forester, “though I am convinced that few acts of fraud ultimately escape detection, I fear they generally attain the end proposed, when friends are

to

to be disunited. So prone are we to receive every flying report, and so negligent to investigate its truth or falsehood, that sometimes irreparable breaches ensue: whereas, would we but take time to examine, we should find most of the circumstances distorted by falsehood, or misrepresented by designing malevolence."

"You speak feelingly, sir," said the good priest. "Pardon my presumption; but I believe there is more hanging on your mind, than the reflections that paper suggested."

"You are right, sir," said Forester. "The Mrs. Meredith mentioned in this confession, is the vilest of creatures. Profiting by the pliability of an injured husband, she has reduced me to the dreadful alternative of becoming a duellist, or passing, in the eye of the world, as a poltroon, who dared not defend what he dared to do."

"Will you dare to fight a duel?" demanded the priest.

"Why should you suspect my courage, sir?"

fir?" said Forester, warmly, and forgetting the folly of the question.

"I simply meant," said the priest, with a submissive air, "to ask if you had the courage to commit an action your heart must condemn?"

"Will not my injuries be a sufficient excuse? I have served the man who dares to insult me: I have endeavoured to save him from destruction: he blindly rushes on it: his folly deserves punishment."

"How," cried the priest (seriously raising his eyes to Heaven), "shall any man presume to think that vengeance belongs to him? Shall a mortal hand presume to guide the thunders of Omnipotence?"

Forester had been inadvertently betrayed into a false train of reasoning, if reasoning it might be called. He abruptly changed the subject, and soon after Mr. Butler took his leave. The paper Forester possessed, might render him an essential service: he therefore resolved to take it with him on the morrow, and flash conviction in the face

face of Meredith, if he should be yet dupe enough to listen to his deceitful wife. When Forester retired to his chamber, he found it impossible to close his eyes. He wrote a short note to Lord Arrowsworth, in case any fatal catastrophe should take place; and, for the first time in his life, rejoiced in his orphan state. If he fell, he left no father to bewail his loss: his death would render no mother childless: he felt himself a solitary, a superfluous being, whose existence was a matter of unconcern to any; and, could he have spared Meredith a crime, would have blessed the hand that freed him from the burden of life.

At five o'clock he wrapped himself in a great coat, and left the house, not forgetting to take with him the precious paper left him by Butler. Day just began to break; and as he approached the appointed spot, he beheld Meredith hastily walking to and fro. He joined him. They stood gazing at each other for a few moments. At length, Meredith, in a cool, contemptuous manner,

manner, said, "We are well here: here are no witnesses." He then desired Forester to produce his pistols. Seeing Forester look at him with commiseration, he, with an oath, repeated his words.

"Hear me, Meredith," said Forester. "I pity your delusion. I will not lift my hand against you, except in self-defence. What is my crime?"

"Dare you ask? Produce your pistols, sir."

"I have none. I am come hither, I say, to know my crime. If I am a villain, treat me as such; and if my actions deserve death, inflict the punishment. Is a villain to be on an equal footing with a man of honor?"

Meredith, in spite of his anger, could not but feel the candor with which this was spoken. He knew the observation to be just; but he endeavoured to smother the softer emotions that were so suddenly arising in his bosom. "You have irreparably wronged me," said he; "and now, tired of life,

life, you would, as a last outrage, make me an assassin."

"Not so, by Heaven!" exclaimed Forester. "We are incapable of either action. I never wronged you, and you cannot become an assassin, if, indeed, duelling may not be properly termed assassination. Listen to me, Meredith—I have tamely borne the name of villain, for I do not deserve it; I have been threatened with a suspicion of cowardice—My conduct unequivocally proves my courage. Few would dare, (why will you force me to be an egotist?) after such a letter as I received from you, to allow you any explanation. Their *honor* would be tainted!—false and absurd prejudice! There can exist no honor incompatible with justice: and *that* makes me entreat, nay, let me say insist, that you inform me why we meet as enemies."

"It is just," said Meredith, after a gloomy pause, "that you should hear the catalogue of your crimes: may they gnaw your heart with anguish! Hear me, sir.

You professed yourself my friend : you taught me to believe you such : unbounded was my reliance on you. It has ever been my lot to be the dupe of those in whom I placed the greatest confidence ; and I find you, like the rest of the world, selfish and inhuman."

Forester bit his lip, and with difficulty kept silence.

" My wife," continued Meredith, " was once the ornament of the first circles : her heart untainted, her character unblemished. You first seduced her to error : you, the friend of her youth, in whose honor she thought she might safely confide, drew her from the path of rectitude. This she has confessed to me with all the energy of truth, and sincerity of penitence. I have the letter : here it is : read it ; and, after confessing your guilt, act like a man."

" I *shall* act like a man," said Forester, while he took the letter with a firm hand ; at the same time he beheld Meredith with so steady a gaze, that, had not his reason
been

been totally warped by rage, it must have told him that such was not the look of guilt.

There was light sufficient to distinguish the writing, and Forester perused the deceitful scroll :

“ I CONFESS, sir, that my behaviour towards you has been such as to justify the idea I entertain, that you will suspect all I may say to be void of truth. Yet if you can credit a woman you *once* so tenderly loved, oh, believe my sincere penitence; believe me, when I cast myself at your feet, not for your protection, but forgiveness. Never should your repose have been troubled by me (for I would not hurt your feelings), if I did not perceive that you are likely to become the dupe of the villain who is also the cause of my present humiliation. Hear my sad story : my heart bleeds at the recollection. Horrible is retrospect to the guilty; yet I have not lost every virtue—I have a mind that can shrink,

shrink, painfully shrink, from the touch of self-reproach : to weep my errors is all that is left me ; to repair them is impossible.

“ Some months prior to our marriage, a young man, gifted, as I falsely thought, with the best of hearts, after an acquaintance of many years, took advantage of a weak moment, and—I became unworthy of the hand you proffered. I never loved my seducer : spare me on this head : I deserve humiliation, but cannot bear to wound my own bosom. Pride came to my aid—a false pride. I wished to hide my shame from a pitiless world, and became really guilty, by becoming your wife. A state of mind, little short of madness, succeeded my union with you. I left you, for I was unworthy to be yours. I could not bear to listen to lavish professions of love, from the man I had so much injured. But who ought to be the object of your anger ? I am contented to suffer, but let vengeance also fall on the author of my misery : let it fall on the wretch who deceives you : let it

it fall on *Forester*!—He is the man to whom you owe your shame; a hypocrite, whose mild and insinuating manners act only as a cover to the most deep-laid plans of vice. By his desire, I treated him in public as an indifferent person; nay, sometimes acted towards him with rudeness: yet, when we seemed the coldest to each other, the stronger was our connexion.—I have done, sir: may the prayers be heard, which I daily put up to Heaven for your health and peace. I mean to leave the kingdom. Ask me not where I go; but in my exile, let me have the consolation to reflect, that the partner of my crime has felt the vengeance of an injured husband.

“EMILY.”

Forester read the letter twice over, and almost began to suspect Meredith in jest, or himself in a dream. Returning the paper, he coolly asked if he really could put confidence in the assertion of such a woman? or if, upon re-perusing the letter,

a doubt could remain upon his mind? "Your wife," said he, "has here failed of her usual art. Allowing the truth of her assertion, and that she was unworthy, on my account, of being your wife, she surely had no inducement to elope with my friend, or to break open the lock of your escrutoire."

"Damnation!" exclaimed Meredith. "Have you the insolence to pretend to be in the right? Take one of my pistols; for I swear by all that's sacred, one of us shall never return from this place alive."

"I have here," said Forester, taking from his pocket-book the paper given him by Butler, "an additional proof of the integrity of your wife: read it, and confess that a woman who would act in so scandalous a manner, is unworthy the smallest credit."

"Perish the forgery!" And tearing the proffered paper, Meredith threw it from him.

Forester

Forester eagerly picked up the pieces, and turning fiercely to his antagonist, he exclaimed, "By Heaven, sir, this is too much: I find that I must meet you on your own terms, however my heart may disapprove them. It shall be so, but not to-day. I have yet the duties of friendship to fulfil; nor shall your unjustifiable impetuosity prevent me from so doing. I once thought you worthy of my esteem: I am undeceived. I will meet you here this day three weeks."

He then turned away, and was leaving the place, when Meredith, in a softened voice, said, "Is it possible you can be innocent? I fear I have been too rash."

"It is too late," replied Forester, haughtily, "to enter into any farther explanation."

"Yet, hold, Mr. Forester: whatever I may have said, I never meant to doubt your courage."

"You have no reason to do so, and shall

have none." With these words, Forester suddenly walked away, leaving Meredith a prey to conflicting passions.

Emily's triumph was almost complete. The man she most hated, and a husband she despised, were, by her successful arts, completely estranged from each other. Although her temper was violent, she could, when she gave way to reflection, form a just notion of the human heart. She knew that Meredith loved her to dotage, prior to her elopement; and as she had studied his character for many years, she knew that little art was necessary to work upon his feelings. It never once occurred to her that her husband would again receive her into favor: she knew that to be impossible: he was too much a man of the world: but she was convinced of his attachment; and relying upon it, wrote the penitent letter, well knowing that Meredith's impetuosity would scorn the dictates of reason, and that his antagonist was a man of too much spirit
patiently

patiently to suffer reproach. In this she had nearly failed. Forester, pitying the folly of his challenger, had borne his invectives, as far as it was in man to bear. Had Meredith's heart softened but an instant sooner, an explanation might have taken place, and all been amicably adjusted: but now the die was cast, and a false pride prevented either party from making any advances to reconciliation. Forester, though a man of reflection and principle, permitted passion to dissolve the influence of both. He would not trust himself to think on the promise he had made of meeting the colonel in a duel—the term by which a premeditated murder is sanctioned: he drove away the idea, and only thought how to restore Cuthbert to his sorrowing friends. To effect this, he put in practice every art in his power: at length, he was necessitated to send an advertisement to the public prints, describing his person, and inviting him to return to

his forgiving father. Every search was made, and large rewards were offered to any who would give such information as might tend to the discovery of his abode.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

—Forgive me—but forgive me!

ALL endeavours to trace the fugitive Cuthbert were, for some time, fruitless; and Forester beheld, with fullen despair, the time approaching when he was to meet Colonel Meredith in the field. In one of his rambles about the streets, hoping chance might again befriend him, he thought he beheld Hartlebury at a distance: he hastened towards him, and, to his great joy, found he was not deceived. Hartlebury informed him that he was but that very morning arrived in town from his estate in Yorkshire, where he had shut himself up some time, in consequence of Baynton's unfortunate catastrophe. He added, that he had formed a resolution of never playing for more than a certain sum, and by reducing his expenses, yet relieve the oppressed

pressed and honest debtor. Forester, in return, related all that had passed between Meredith and himself. Hartlebury could not contain his indignation: he declared that the colonel should make every apology for his ungentlemanlike outrage; and would that moment have gone in search of him, had not Forester insisted, with vehemence, that as Meredith had wantonly provoked the duel, he must answer for the consequence. He confessed that he well knew the atrocity of the act he was about to commit, but his injuries must plead his excuse. Hartlebury, though he possessed an intimate knowledge of mankind, was here guilty of an oversight. Instead of giving way to the burst of passion, he opposed its current, by argument, till Forester was worked to such a pitch of frenzy, that he vowed his injuries could never be washed away, but by the blood of his challenger. He then requested Hartlebury to take upon him the office of second, if necessary; willing to prevent mischief, he acquiesced,

escaped, and Forester proposed introducing him to Mr. Apsley. They proceeded to Swallow Street, and had no sooner knocked at the door, than a shabby-looking man came up to them, and begged to know if they had not advertised a young gentleman who had run away? Forester, overjoyed, begged him to come in. Mr. Apsley and his sister-in-law had taken a short ride into the country, for the benefit of the air; but Sinclair was sitting in the parlour. The man, after some hesitation, and cautiously inquiring when and in what manner the fifty guineas were to be paid for his information, declared, that a short time before, a young gentleman had come to his house, in Southwark, and hired a small garret, at the rate of eighteen-pence a week: the gentleman was tall, with light blue eyes, and flaxen hair; he was very stoutly made, but appeared ill and dejected. "I saw from the first," said the man, "that something was wrongish, and thought as how he wanted to escape from a *baily*, for he kept close,

close, and would sit and *fithe* for hours together. He never eat, as I could see; and he only stirred out when it was dark, so I suppose he got his victuals then. I ax'd my wife if we should not give him a bit of dinner now and then? for I declare, somehow, I was quite sorry for him; but my Betty was snappish (the best women are so sometimes), and said she did not half like him; so I thought as how I'd ax him myself; but my gentleman was quite angry: he looked outrageous mad, and asked me what I meant? but a minute afterwards, he thanked me very kindly, and begged leave to be excused; and he breathed so hard, that I was afraid he was choking. He has laid upon the bed since yesterday morning, and I'll be sworn he has not put wet or dry in his mouth all that time, though I offered him as nice bacon and greens as ever was seen." He then told them, that hearing fifty guineas were offered as a reward to any who would discover the abode of a runaway gentleman, as the description answered

swered to his lodger, he had applied. If it had been to bring him into trouble, he would have scorned such an action; but it could be no harm to restore him to friends willing to forgive him.

The man received the thanks of all for his humanity; and as no doubt could be entertained, from the accuracy of the description, but that his lodger was the long-lost Cuthbert, a consultation was held in what manner to conduct the interview with his father. Sinclair however, recollecting that his brother was probably perishing with hunger, insisted upon immediately proceeding to Southwark. Without farther delay the whole party prepared to set off; but while Sinclair was looking for his hat, Mr. Apsley and his sister-in-law drove to the door. Sinclair, not able to contain his rapture, inconsiderately exclaimed, "Oh, my dear sir, we have found my brother!"

Mr. Apsley bore the intelligence with more fortitude than was expected; he insisted upon hearing the whole account, and
while

while he deplored the errors of his child, which had reduced him to such extreme wretchedness, he said that no word of reproach should farther wound the sufferer.

In this opinion he was joined by Miss M'Allister, who, weeping at the idea of the heir to Sir Gilbert Potheringham being reduced to misery, declared, that, had she foreseen the accident, she would have put an elixir of her own composition in her pocket, which was sovereign in cases of a weakened stomach. It was with difficulty she could be persuaded to stay at home herself, or permit Mr. Apsley to proceed to Southwark; but he was peremptory; he knew that Cuthbert loved him, and, once assured of his forgiveness, would return to his forsaken home. He meant to greet him with the smile of paternal affection, and even treat his follies with an affected levity, reserving more serious admonition till the afflicted youth should be able to bear it. A hackney coach was called, and the whole party

party were conveyed to a mean-looking alley in Southwark. Mr. Apsley was carefully lifted from the vehicle by Forester and Hartlebury; he was with difficulty supported while he mounted the narrow creaking staircase; at length he reached the garret, where his darling son was suffering the united pangs of hunger and self-reproach. In a faltering voice he begged that he might enter it alone. Hartlebury beckoned his companions, and they descended to a shabby-looking parlour. In the mean time Mr. Apsley entered the garret; the single window it boasted was composed of small squares of glass, and some dirty rags were thrust through many broken parts to exclude the wind; a bedstead, without curtains, stood near, and on this the unfortunate Cuthbert lay extended.

Mr. Apsley approached; a heavy groan burst from his agonized bosom, and he was obliged to lean for support against the naked wall. A faint voice from the bed inquired who was there. Mr. Apsley could not force
a reply.

a reply. Cuthbert slowly arose; he put his hand to his head, and with difficulty kept himself from falling. He again demanded why any person intruded.

"Am I then an intruder, Cuthbert?" said Mr. Apsley.

"Ha! you know my name!—But whoever you may be, fly from hence; I am a polluted monster, whose sight must blast all who behold me with horror."

Mr. Apsley contemplated the altered form of his son with the keenest anguish; his color was fled, his cheeks were cadaverous, and his eye, once the seat of animation, was dull and half closed; his long flaxen hair was untied and fallen over his shoulders, while his dress exhibited the marks of squalid poverty.

"Cuthbert," said Mr. Apsley trembling, "my dear, my beloved child, do you not—or—will you not know your father?"

The youth slowly advanced. "My eyes are weak," said he; "yet could I once more behold my father, and receive his forgive-

forgiveness, I should close them for ever in peace."

"Behold your father—receive his forgiveness—return to your forsaken home—and be, as formerly, the pride and joy of my heart."

Cuthbert heard not the conclusion of this speech—he had fallen senseless on the floor. Mr. Apsley endeavoured to call for assistance, but his voice was lost in his emotions; his infirm state precluded the possibility of affording any relief, and after some time his son breathed a deep sigh, and endeavoured to rise. Mr. Apsley stretched out his hand to assist him; Cuthbert eagerly grasped it, and looking wildly in his face, he exclaimed, "You do not curse me then?"

"May God bless you ever," said the father, while the tears flowed abundantly down his manly cheeks: "you have been seduced by passion, and who shall pretend at all times to the undisturbed empire of reason? You are not so guilty as you imagine ;

gine; indeed, indeed, my boy, you are not."

"Your kindness, my injured father, comes too late; I am broken-hearted—lost to every wish but that of obtaining your forgiveness. The world you painted in the fairest colors, I find to be a monstrous assemblage of deformity; you taught me to believe the existence of honor, faith, and love—too well I am convinced of your mistake and my credulity; yet if your precepts could fail; if I, who boasted a father like yourself, could become a villain, who shall be free from crime? Your mistaken kindness taught me to put too high a value on the few merits I once possessed, and a confidence in my own strength has brought me to destruction."

"I allow your charge to be just, my child—I have been to blame. Talk not to me of forgiveness, but say if you can pardon the error of which I have been guilty, that of committing you to a world where every snare is spread for inexperienced

enced youth, without properly putting you on your guard."

"You vainly endeavour to reconcile me to myself. No, my father, never can I consent to live when my past conduct will be to me a never-ceasing torment; when I am no more, perhaps the tear of pity may drop upon my grave."

"Speak not thus, my dear child," said Mr. Apsley; "you have yet many, many happy years to come, when the errors you see and lament will no longer be had in remembrance. Come then with me; your brother is waiting with anxiety to greet you—your father entreats you to see him."

"I cannot—no, I cannot go," exclaimed Cuthbert: "my brother, said you? he doubtless exults in my crimes—it is just he should, for I was severe upon his errors."

"Oh, my Cuthbert!" said Mr. Apsley, mournfully, "I expected to find you stubborn, but not unjust."

Cuthbert sank on his wretched bed.—
"And is it possible," said he, "that you
can

can forgive, and my brother lament my fall from rectitude? Oh yes—it must be so—pardon me, my dear, my revered father: but I am sunk in guilt—my heart is vitiated; what wonder, then, that I should judge of others by my own standard?”

“Will you then accompany me?” cried the father; “blessed hearing! once more shall we be happy. But, my poor boy, you want assistance, and I am unable to afford it.”

“I am indeed faint,” said Cuthbert, rising, “for I have not tasted any food these two days past; I can, however, reach the foot of the stairs, and assistance shall be procured to conduct you.”

He then walked a few paces, but a sudden giddiness seized him, and he fell on the floor. Mr. Apfley advanced as well as his malady would permit. Cuthbert was sensible; weakness alone had caused his fall; and while his father bent over him in silent anguish, Forester entered the garret: he approached the spot where Cuthbert lay extended.

extended. Mr. Apsley begged him to get assistance to remove his son. By the aid of Hartlebury the youth was conveyed down stairs, where Sinclair had procured a bason of soup; but nature was too far exhausted, and Cuthbert had no sooner touched the first spoonful with his lips, than he felt a loathing of all food, and fainted away.

Hartlebury seized him by the hand; it was firmly clenched, and when by violence it was opened, a miniature fell from it to the ground—it was the picture of Emily: the painter had exerted his happiest art; a voluptuous smile played upon her lips, and her eyes were expressive of the most languishing sensibility: it was a picture which might have convinced the most decided admirers of Lavater of the fallacy of appearances.

Sinclair rushed from the house, and returned with a physician. By this time Cuthbert had recovered his senses, and taken some refreshment; he was perfectly collected, and when Sinclair entered the
room

room he stretched out one hand, and with the other covered his face. The proffered hand was eagerly grasped by the truly affectionate brother.

"How do you do, Cuthbert?" said he. "Don't you know your old friends, Forester and all? Cheer up, my man, and deuce take all sorrow; my heart is as light as a feather—won't you be as happy as I am?"—He wiped a tear from his eye.

"You may be happy," said Cuthbert; "for your heart acquits you of crime; but what must be my feelings, when I reflect upon the sorrows I have caused my father, and the injustice I have done you?"

"Aye, aye," cried Sinclair; "we'll talk about all that some other time—on a long evening at Elm Grove when I want a nap—take my arm—lean harder, that's my good fellow; I long to see you out of this cobwebby palace: my aunt shall boil tapioca, and make decoctions of bark; that will please her, and set you on your legs as stout as ever."

Cuthbert arose, and attempted to smile; he walked a few steps, and stopped. "I have lost a miniature," said he, faintly; "do not deprive me of it."

"Permit me to hide it from you," said Forester: "the sight would be painful—let me beg that——"

"By no means," interrupted Hartlebury. "Here, sir, is the miniature; let not the slightest disappointment cloud the happiness of the day."

Cuthbert took the miniature; he pressed it to his lips, and turning to Hartlebury, "To you, sir," said he, "I resign this once precious token; take it, never let me see it more; it is a small sacrifice, but all I have to offer."

He was then lifted into the coach, and conveyed to Swallow Street, where he instantly retired to bed; a physician was sent for, who prescribed for him, though Miss M'Allister was rather piqued at her opinion not being consulted; she nevertheless acted the part of a good nurse, and

with a circumspection for which she was not much noted, forbore any unpleasant reflection.

Forester now took his leave; and as he was proceeding to Lord Arrowsworth's he was met by Creswell. A cool bow was all the notice Forester condescended to take of him, and he passed quickly on, when the voice of his tormentor arrested his progress.

"I was going to your lodgings, my dear Mr. Forester," said he in as mild a voice as he could assume; "I have some agreeable news for you."

"I am at present," replied Forester, "in a very happy temper of mind, and can bear, I think, any news, good or bad."

"Well, sir, I must then inform you, that at my repeated solicitation you will at length see your father."

"Permit me, sir, to observe," said Forester, with some indignation, "that you have already once deceived me on that head; beware how you again trifle with my feelings."

"In-

“ Indeed, Mr. Forester, I did all for the best ; but this time I promise you, upon my honor, that you shall see your father ; for though I have told you he was dead, he is alive and well. I dare not inform you who he is, but I suppose he will do that himself. I have endeavoured to supply your want of parents, and I hope my care and——”

Forester interrupted this abject harangue by asking when he should be so happy as to see his father ; and Creswell, after informing him that the day was fixed for the Thursday following at seven in the evening, took leave with many bows.

Forester flew rather than walked to St. James's Square. He firmly believed, that the time was now come when he should see his father ; his heart had long panted for the blissful moment, and when he met Lady Arrowsworth at table, she congratulated him on his altered appearance : indeed, he was no longer the same man ; a joyous smile played upon his animated

countenance, and in the evening, at a musical party, his execution of a difficult concerto on the harp deserved and received the universal plaudit of the company.

What added to the hilarity of the evening was the presence of Hartlebury, who came to Lord Arrowsworth's for the first time since his retirement; not a gloomy thought checked the gaiety of Forester; and when supper was announced he seized his friend by the arm, and in a whisper informed him of the happiness that awaited him on the Thursday evening.

"You forget then," said Hartlebury, "that you are to meet Colonel Meredith in the morning."

An attempt to paint the feelings of Forester were vain. In a moment his "airy palace of ideal joy" was overthrown, and the most excruciating feelings rent his bosom. At length, in a faltering voice, he asked if it were not possible to postpone the meeting, were it but for a day.

"It has already been postponed three weeks

weeks at your desire: how can you with propriety ask a longer delay?"

A servant at this moment brought a note to Forester, saying, that it had been left in the morning, but by a mistake of the porter was not given to him for delivery before—it was in Meredith's hand.

"SIR,

"I SHALL be at the place where last we met, on Thursday by day-break; I shall be attended by Major Molyneux—I mention this, that you may take your measures accordingly.

"PHILIP MEREDITH."

The note was without a date, and Harlebury, to preclude all idea of postponing the duel, confessed that he had called on Meredith in hopes of accommodating the affair, but that he had left town, and the people in Bond Street knew not whither he was gone. Forester pleaded indisposition, and excused himself from attending the party at

supper. Hartlebury, after giving all the consolation the affair would admit of, soon retired; and the harassed youth, after a passionate burst of tears, sat down to write a letter to his unknown father, in case the duel should prove fatal. This he meant to carry with him to the field; he directed it under cover to Creswell, though he much feared it would not reach the hands for which it was intended.

“TORN by a thousand passions do I sit down to write. My father, when you peruse these lines the hand that traced them will be cold, the heart that dictated will throb no more. I sink to the grave unlamented—I have none to love me—none to soften the horrors of death. But let me collect my scattered thoughts; let me remember that I write for the only time to a father—oh, soothing sound! why was a parent’s embrace withheld from me?—But I again wander; forgive my incoherence; but my brain is almost frenzied.

“I owe

“ I owe you much, my father ; you have not neglected the creature to whom you gave life ; I have never felt the pressure of want ; you were pleased to cultivate my mind by education, and appointed a man of universal respectability to watch over my conduct. Will it be believed that to one, whose moral character stands high in the world’s opinion, whose integrity and fair-dealing not even calumny dare attack, I owe the majority of my errors ? Yes, my father, to the guardian you chose do I impute them. I have (let me boast, it) an independent soul ; I can smile contempt on the man who would humble me. I dare not flatter ; how then could I secure the favorable opinion of a harsh and tyrannical man ? When did I attempt to conciliate him, that my efforts were not checked by his frown ? When did I bear with his reproaches, in order to disarm invective by submission, that I have not been deemed fullen and supercilious ? I was found guilty of many real but more ima-

ginary errors—What method was taken to eradicate these?—Reproach.

“ I dare call Heaven to witness, my father, that although my passions may have hurried me sometimes to excess, my heart has never swerved from the right line of virtue. Yes, egotism is now pardonable ; for the grave will shut me from a world, whose bitter cup alone has been my portion. I possessed a feeling heart, but my passions were my masters ; by working upon the one a man of penetration might have checked the impetuosity of the other. Many were my early follies—the force of reason would have restrained what reproach but hurried on. A parent has but half discharged his duty, if he consult not the temper as well as the integrity of the guardian of his child. But pardon me, my father, I mean not a reflection ; your higher avocations may have claimed your undivided attention ; the fate of Europe may have hung upon your lips. Here then I pause—but before I bid you for ever adieu, let

let me entreat that I may live in your memory. My mind was formed for the discharge of filial duty; the name of parent creates in me an awe bordering, perhaps, on superstition, and certainly on enthusiasm. Had I been the offspring of meaner parents, I should have assisted them in the labors of husbandry; and when, exhausted by age, they no longer could wrestle with their infirmities, I should have been the comfort of their declining years; sweet, hallowed would have been my labor, for it would have been sanctioned by a parent's blessing.

“ Envidable situation ! such is not my—

“ Adieu, my father, adieu for ever.”

CHAP. XI.

Morar, thou art low, indeed; thou hast no mother to mourn thee, no maid with her tears of love.—Dead is she that brought thee forth; fallen is the daughter of Morglan.—Who is this?—it is thy father, O Morar! the father of no son but thee. Weep, thou father of Morar, weep; but thy son heareth thee not. No more shall he hear thy voice, no more awake at thy call. OSSIAN.

THE next morning, when Forester met the family at breakfast, his blood-shot eyes but too well betrayed the sleepless night he had passed; his changed countenance alarmed Lady Arrowsworth, who proposed sending for a physician. Forester, faintly smiling, declined any offer of that nature, and endeavoured to assume a more cheerful look. The effort was vain: his clouded brow indicated the acuteness of his feelings; and her Ladyship, who possessed no great share of penetration, ascribed his appearance

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pearance to bodily suffering. As soon as breakfast was over, the gentlemen retired to the library: a silence of some minutes ensued, which was broken by Lord Arrowworth.

“What shall we read this morning, Mr. Forester?”

“Whatever your Lordship pleases.”

“Shall we finish the *Aminta*?”

Forester took up the book: his eyes wandered over the words; but his thoughts were otherwise engaged, and he read so ill, that his Lordship interrupting him, proposed any other work more agreeable, for Forester was by no means a proficient in the Italian language.

“You promised,” said Lord Arrowworth, “to show me some translations from the German of Bürger; have you a copy about you?”

“I have,” said Forester; and taking a folded paper from his pocket-book, he, with a vacant air, presented it to his patron.

Lord Arrowsworth had no sooner began to read than he started; Forester was roused from his reverie, and beheld with confusion, that he had given Meredith's note instead of the translation.

Lord Arrowsworth returning the note, said, with a degree of coldness, "I forbear to make any remark on a subject, with which you did not think proper to acquaint me."

"If," said Forester, "I have acted wrong, attribute my conduct to its real motive—an unwillingness to expose myself to the censure of those I most esteem and revere."

"How far your conduct may deserve praise or censure, I am ignorant," said his Lordship, with more urbanity; "yet, if I may judge of your character by what I have seen, you would never provoke, and never refuse a challenge."

"You are right," my Lord; "I never would provoke a challenge; but may not some circumstances justify the refusal of
one,

one, particularly when passion blinds the challenger?"

"In that case let his life pay the forfeit of his temerity: to what purpose is reason given us—but to act as a rein to the passions?"

"True, my Lord; and, in my opinion, reason will tell us, that we are to pardon the impetuosity of anger—as we pardon the invectives of a drunkard; let us restrain our own passions, and, by the dint of reason, disarm our antagonists."

"The world," said Lord Arrowsworth, smiling, "is not apt to have recourse to such arms. I fear you incline to that philosophy now so prevalent, which inculcates the idea of a better order of things, and a new arrangement of society."

"That man in his present situation is as he ought not to be," said Forester, "is evident; yet I cannot but ridicule the idea of those who fancy a future Utopia. The present state of society may be ameliorated; but vice and folly, under any form of government—

vernment, will twine their baneful weeds with the garland of virtue and patriotism. I say this to exculpate myself from the charge of a romantic philosophy, the idea of which, though pleasing, is fallacious."

"If, then," said Lord Arrowsworth, "you are not the friend of innovation——"

"Pardon me, my Lord; I am the friend of any innovation, which certainly secures the real happiness of mankind: I am only the enemy of wild experiment."

"You will however allow, that an individual opinion will not change men and manners; you are here challenged to the field; you may plead that such a practice is contrary to your principles; but will the world give you credit for heroism in refusing the meeting? Will they not attribute your conduct to the basest motives?"

"I know the world too well, my Lord, to attempt to contradict what you advance."

He then informed Lord Arrowsworth of every particular that led to the duel, not
even

even concealing the ignominy with which Meredith had treated him. His Lordship listened with astonishment, not unmingled with contempt.

“Is it possible,” said he, “that you could endure all this?”

“I am sorry to say that I could not; my passions at length became my masters.”

“To be accused,” continued his Lordship, “of forgery! to be branded by the name of villain! Good Heavens! how could a man I thought so——but I have done.”

“If your Lordship judges me unworthy your esteem,” said Forester, with a haughty look, “I can only lament the difference of our opinion; and grateful for your past favors, decline their continuance.”

“Pardon me,” said Lord Arrowsworth, “if I have inadvertently said any thing to hurt your feelings; yet I confess I was shocked to think on the tameness with which you bore insult. I am not, Mr. Forester, the advocate of duelling; but, in such a case as yours, the sword of a man of spirit would instinc-

instinctively leap from the scabbard. Do not mistake me; I mean not to doubt your courage, I only wish to excite it."

"You think then, my Lord, that this duel is unavoidable?" said Forester, with a long-drawn sigh.

"I do," replied his Lordship; "no circumstance whatever can justify your refusal."

Forester sat a few minutes in a gloomy reverie: at length starting up, he exclaimed, "Oh, yes, there is one circumstance, there is one sufficiently strong to authorize a delay, if not an abandonment, of this sanctioned homicide. I have—I—I have a father."

"Well, sir!"

Forester was silent: he had, by the advice of Hartlebury, carefully concealed the mystery of his birth from his patron; he resolved not to divulge it now."

"Is your father in such a situation as to need your filial assistance?"

Forester was silent.

"I con-

“ I conclude it is so,” said his Lordship; “ but not even that tie can justify your putting up with insult. The laws of honor require you to meet your antagonist; summon your resolution, forget all but your injuries, and show that you are a man of spirit.”

“ How mortifying the idea,” said Forester, mournfully, “ that, to prove my courage, I must forfeit self-esteem! You then advise me to this duel, my Lord?”

“ You must comply; your courage I do not doubt. I know well that you hesitate from principle, but the customs of the world must be observed. I strongly advise, and, were I your father, would insist that you meet your insulter in the field.”

“ I have done, my Lord, though I am convinced of the turpitude of the act; I will meet him.”

On the Wednesday evening, Hartlebury called according to appointment at Lord Arrowsworth's. Forester was calm, but his

apparent serenity arose from despair. It was agreed that he should call upon Hartlebury at his lodgings, from whence they were to proceed to the place appointed for the meeting.

Forester gave orders to be called at four o'clock the next morning; and retiring to his chamber, without undressing, he threw himself upon the bed, and endeavoured to procure a temporary oblivion in sleep. Never did night appear to him so tedious! he lay listening to the neighbouring clocks as they struck the quarters, and wondered at the lagging foot of time. A slight storm of hail pattered against the windows; Forester started, he knew not why; a presentiment of the horrors that awaited him seemed to take possession of his mind, and he felt relieved by the tapping of the footman at the door. He bade him enter: the man made his appearance with a light; never was light so welcome to the eyes of Forester. He began

began to make some alteration in his dress. The footman, who had lived with Lord Arrowsworth ever since his marriage, and was a favorite in the family, observed his pallid looks.

“ I fear, sir,” said he, shaking his head, “ that you are going upon no pleasant journey ; I have served many a young nobleman before I came to this house, and can pretty well guess at what you are about.”

“ Indeed !” said Forester, attempting to hide his pistols.

“ Why, yes, certainly, or why should you take those ugly things with you ? Ah, sir, it is at all times a sad thing to fight ; the smallest trifle will do the business : poor Major Maxwell was killed about the feathers in a lady’s head-dress.”

“ Why should you think I am about to fight a duel ?”

“ Come, come, sir,” said the man, “ I will be fair and above-board ; I never lost any thing by that. To confess the truth,
his

his Lordship has informed me of all, and will be at Mr. Hartlebury's this morning. I am to watch you at a distance, and to bring him immediate intelligence of the event; but, now you are drest, fir, let me go off first, for I must hide myself somewhereabouts, and, if you have first fire, do pray take a good aim."

Away ran the man; and Forester leaving the house, found Hartlebury ready drested. They walked towards Tottenham Court Road; the day was not yet broke, and the two friends paced slowly backwards and forwards: at length, Hartlebury, fearing the effects of a damp raw morning, proposed entering a small public-house which had just been opened. Forester, careless where he went, or what he did, mechanically followed him: a fire had just been lighted; and a woman was busied in putting away a table covered with pewter pots, and the shattered remains of tobacco-pipes. She looked earnestly at them.

"Poor

“ Poor young man !” muttered she to herself.

Hartlebury’s quick ear caught the sound. He gazed at her with surprise, and their eyes encountered.

“ Aye, aye, I see how it is,” said she; “ you are both unlike highwaymen, so I’ll be burnt if you are not going to fight.”

“ What can make you suppose such a thing ?” said Hartlebury, with amazement.

“ Ah ! Lord bless you,” said she, “ we poor folks must see all and say nothing.— Why, do you think you will be the first that has walked this way to fight ? It was but a week ago that a sweet young man was shot through the heart in the fields hard by. I’m sure I cried when I saw him. He put me so in mind of my poor Ned, who was killed on board the *Belliqueux*.”

“ Are duels common here ?” demanded Hartlebury.

“ Once

“ Once a month, upon a *beverage*,” said the good woman; “ though, for the matter of that, they seldom do much harm. One fires, and misses: t’other shoots in the air, and then they say their honor is satisfied. Now I think there was more honor (and glory into the bargain) to be shot like poor Ned, in defence of his king and country—every body was sorry for him; but who cares for a man who is shot by another in a duel?”

“ But I can assure you,” said Hartlebury, “ that this gentleman and I are not going to fight.”

“ Well, well,” said the woman, “ it’s no bread and butter of mine. God send us all clean hands and hearts at supper-time. Fighting is grown so common, that I verily believe our pot-boy and Giles the brickdust-man will soon leave off plain boxing, and get their brains blown out, like their betters.”

The morning began to dawn. Forester arose, and observed it to his friend. They paid

paid for what they left untouched, and walked hastily to the appointed spot. Meredith was not arrived, but in a few minutes a post-chaise was seen driving furiously towards them. At about the distance of a hundred yards it stopped, and Forester shortly after recognised his antagonist, accompanied by his second and a surgeon. A cool bow took place between the parties. At sight of Meredith, the remembrance of the insult he had suffered flashed upon the mind of Forester, and he felt his anger revive. The seconds withdrew for a short time, and an accommodation was proposed; but, not being able to agree upon the terms, it was resolved that the difference must be decided by the pistol. Forester was allowed the privilege of precedence in firing. The ground was marked out, and the combatants took their stations with intrepidity. Forester was a good marksman, but he would not avail himself of the advantage. He designedly missed his enemy, who immediately

mediately returning the fire, beheld Forester sink to the earth.—Meredith kept his ground; but Hartlebury, Major Molyneux, and the surgeon, ran to his assistance. His waistcoat was torn open, and it appeared that the ball had penetrated the right ribs. The miniature of his mother (which he always wore round his neck) being in the way, the surgeon cut the ribband, and delivered it, by mistake, into the hands of Meredith, who had now joined the group. The colonel took the miniature, and was about to put it in his pocket, when his eye glanced on the features, and he exclaimed, with amazement—

“Heaven and earth! what do I see?”

Major Molyneux, leaving Forester to the care of Hartlebury and the surgeon, advanced towards him, and inquired what was the cause of his disorder. Meredith made no reply, but taking a miniature from his own bosom, gave it to Molyneux, who

who beheld, with amazement, that one was exactly like the other.

"This is extraordinary," cried the major. "Can Mr. Forester speak? I hope—I fervently hope, he is not dead."

"He is not *yet* dead," said the surgeon; "but whether he will ever speak again I much doubt—the wound is mortal."

"Can he be removed?" said Hartlebury.

The answer was affirmative.

"Let him then," added he, "be conveyed to my lodgings in Rathbone Place."

The chaise was in waiting. Forester had fainted from loss of blood, and in that state was conveyed to the lodgings of his friend. Meredith and Molyneux, fearless of the consequences, requested permission to attend them, and having obtained it, they hastily walked to London.—When arrived at Rathbone Place, the surgeon met them at the door. He said,

that although Mr. Forester had recovered his senses and voice, no hope could possibly be entertained of his life. He advised Meredith to fly with all possible speed, as Lord Arrowsworth, who had that moment arrived, might, from the affection he bore his protégé, strain every nerve to punish the author of his death.

Meredith, without answering, abruptly entered the house, and requested that he might once more behold Forester.

Hartlebury, who was much surprised at the strange circumstance of the miniature, ordered him to be admitted. He entered the room, and approached the couch on which the dying youth lay extended—Lord Arrowsworth was supporting his head. An angry glance from that nobleman greeted his entrance.

“I understand you, my Lord,” said Meredith, “and you may believe me, when I assure you that I would not intrude were not intrusion necessary. I wish to elucidate a point of the utmost importance.—

Mr.

Mr. Forester, though you cannot forgive me, at least have the candor to tell me, if you knew the original of these miniatures?"

He held them towards him—but a sudden pang, too severe for endurance at that moment, caused Forester to faint away.

"Why, sir," said Lord Arrowsworth, angrily, "will you torment the man you have injured?"

"Behold these miniatures, my Lord—they exactly resemble each other; one is my property, and the other was this morning taken from the neck of Mr. Forester."

Lord Arrowsworth took the miniatures: he beheld them for a moment; then, starting, he cried—

"Oh, God! oh, God! what a striking resemblance!—say—what was the name of the original?"

"Her name was Middlewich, my Lord."

"And you are——"

“ Her son.”

“ Speak again, and drive me to distraction,” said his Lordship. “ Were you born at Rome?”

“ I was not, my Lord; I never knew my mother. I was removed from her care when an infant by Mr. Meredith, the half brother of Admiral Allingham, whose son I am. My father died at sea, and Mr. Meredith’s fondness towards me was so great, that he allowed me to take his name, and every body believed me to owe my birth to him; which opinion was strengthened by his leaving me the whole of his immense property in England, besides his estates in the West Indies. This secret I have carefully kept from every body except my wife. I had no reserve to her. I should not have known it myself had not my father by adoption left a paper behind him, disclosing the whole affair.—How a copy of this picture, which I have worn from a child, should fall into the hands of Mr. Forester, I am ignorant—
unless

unless——oh, gracious Heaven! the thought is too horrible to be entertained.”

By the assistance of the surgeon, Forester was restored to a sense of existence. Lord Arrowsworth slowly arose from the couch, and, kneeling by the side of it, he softly said—

“ My dear Forester—tell me—whose picture is this?”

“ Oh, my mother!” sighed Forester—
“ my revered mother! let me once more embrace your resemblance.”

“ Hold!” raved Lord Arrowsworth.—
“ Were you born at Rome?”

“ I was.”

“ And your father’s name was——”

“ My father!” continued Forester—
“ yes, I was this evening to have embraced him—e’en now, perhaps, should I have been preparing for the interview—never—never shall I see him—oh, my heart foreboded this!”

“ Were you to have seen your father at

Mr. Creswell's this evening?" demanded his Lordship, with a look of horror.

"I was."

"Oh, my son—my murdered son—embrace your father! and say—can you forgive him, for urging you, an unwilling victim, to destruction?—Mysterious Providence! We were to have met this day—oh, misery! is it *thus* we meet?"

He flung himself again on his knees, and seized the hand of the dying youth.—Hartlebury hastened to his Lordship's assistance, while the surgeon compelled Forrester to swallow a cordial. His senses did not fail him, and an explanation, sudden as unexpected, took place.

Agony was painted on the countenance of Lord Arrowsworth, while his son's exhibited a serene resignation. Hartlebury, whose feelings were almost too severe for endurance, sat at a small distance from the couch, while Meredith, with a smile of horror, contemplated his dying brother,
and

and seemed to revolve some dark design in his mind. Forester's wound now grew acutely painful; but his eyes still gleamed with their native fire, while he addressed Lord Arrowsworth by the endearing name of *father*. His Lordship bent over him in silent grief. He now lamented his pride—a pride that had warped his better reason: he beheld his son a victim to false honor—a victim to obedience—a father had forced his child to the field, where he had fallen By the hands of his brother.

Such are the evils of illegitimacy!

Forester now felt that the hand of death was on him; he beckoned the surgeon:

“Do not deceive me, sir,” said he.—
“Will this wound terminate my existence?”

The surgeon kept a significant silence.

“I understand you, sir. How many hours may I yet linger in pain?”

“I fear, sir,” said the surgeon, “that by the evening you will be past the sense of pain.”

Lord Arrowsworth deeply groaned.—Hartlebury hid his face in his handkerchief, and Meredith gloomily smiled.—Forester presented a paper to Hartlebury: it contained some directions, written the evening before. He then seized the hand of his father.

“That paper,” said he, “contains my last wishes: yet let me do an act of justice, and well employ the few remaining moments of life. I have saved a poor woman from misery: my death will again involve her. She was a servant of my mother; she nursed me in my infancy: let me once more see her, that I may recommend her to your protection.”

Hartlebury was going to object; but the surgeon whispered, that the slightest contradiction might hasten the awful moment; and the servant was dispatched for Mrs. Thomas.

Forester now fixed his eyes on Meredith.

“Do

“Do you yet believe me guilty, my brother? (for that such you are, these miniatures but too well testify.) I am innocent of what I am accused. Speak kindly then to me, and, if necessary, accept my forgiveness.”

“Brother!” exclaimed Meredith.—
“Brother!—yes—worthy am I of the title! wretch that I am! But I will not give way to womanish complaint. Innocent! Why should you be so? It were proper—it would crown this scene of horror, if you had seduced your brother’s wife. No crime had then been wanting, and the attendant evils of bastardy had been complete.”

“Speak not thus,” said Forester, in a languid voice, “but give me your hand, my brother.”

“Oh, vile Emily—this is thy work!” exclaimed Meredith.

“Emily—” faintly repeated Forester—
“oh, most true—she bade me think on her when an unexpected storm burst upon

my head ; too well I feel that her prophetic threat is fulfilled."

" And I am a fratricide ! Curfed be the hour when firft my eyes opened to the light of day ! May the Author of my being eternally——"

" Hold !" cried Forefter, with returning ftrength—" hold !" (he half raifed himfelf from the couch.) " Curfe not— withhold the dread, the unnatural execration !—From my foul do I forgive you my death—nay, my brother, I thank you for it.—My father—may happinefs be yours ; and may Heaven alleviate the pangs you feel ! may it, likewise, pardon the errors of a misguided——my head fwims—— bleffings on——"

The unhappy youth funk backwards—a convulfive shivering feized his limbs, and, while his mother's name trembled on his lips, he expired.

A filence of fome minutes enfued—an awful horror reigned in the bofom of all ; but Meredith approached the body, furveyed

veyed it with attention, and again the smile of desperation gave a gloomy ferocity to his features. At this moment a feeble voice was heard to exclaim—“Where is he? where is he? let me see him once more”—and Mrs. Thomas, supported by a servant, entered the room.

“It is all over now, Edward,” said Hartlebury, in a low voice. “Convey the poor woman away.”

But she had overheard him: she raised her eyes towards the sofa, and, springing from the footman, by an effort of despair, she reached the spot where lay extended the pale corpse of her benefactor. But when she beheld his eyes fixed, and his features ghastly in death, she uttered the most piercing shrieks:

“Oh, that ever I should live to see this day!” cried she. “My dear, dear benefactor! What villain, what monster in a human form, could lift his hand against the mildest of God’s creatures? Oh! he

would not have hurt a worm! He was so kind, so good, so charitable! I hoped to have ended my days under his roof. Little did I think I should ever have had to cry over his grave!"

Hartlebury would have removed her from the melancholy scene. He observed, that her complaints would but augment the grief of her benefactor's nearest friends.

"I will not go," cried she; "never, never will I leave him. Friends! why did not his *friends* prevent his death?—Poor, sweet young man! he had no friends, though he deserved a thousand—he had no father to advise him, or he would never have come to this untimely end."

The surgeon now attempted to remove her, but, sinking on her knees, she clasped her withered arms round one of the feet of the corpse, which hung over the sofa.

"I will not go," raved she: "shame on you all! How do I know but that you are the murderers?"

Lord Arrowsworth could scarcely bear the scene. Meredith continued wrapped in gloomy thought.

“ He lives ! he lives ! he is not dead ! ” cried the grateful mourner. — “ Here ! here ! feel his hand—it is not cold—no—no—it is not cold ; ” and she attempted to chafe it between hers.

“ It is all in vain,” said Lord Arrowsworth ; “ the unhappy young man is no more : take comfort ; you have lost a friend in him—you shall find one in his father.”

“ His father ! ” screamed she. “ Oh, yes, it is, indeed ! — Mr. Hewardine—Mr. Hewardine !—though you have come too late to save him, God will forgive your neglect of him when alive, so you but pursue his murderers.”

“ That task be mine,” said Meredith. “ I vow, solemnly vow, that an exemplary vengeance shall overtake them.”

The

The poor woman immediately recognised the colonel.

“Do you say so?” exclaimed she: “and will you really keep your word?—Oh, look at the dear youth who now lies dead before you, and join with me to call down curses on the wretch who could lift his hand against him.”

“*I do!*” said Meredith, with calm desperation; “and if there be a misery he can yet experience, may it be inflicted on him!”

“What is your meaning, sir?” faintly demanded Lord Arrowsworth. “Will you augment my miseries? Am I not sufficiently wretched; sufficiently humbled? Will you, by self-murder, expiate your crime, and add a greater weight to the load which bends me to the earth?”

“What, my Lord! shall I consent to live? Never—my eye is tearless, my purpose unalterable; but I will not fall alone.

alone. The cause—the vile cause of this scene of horror shall share my fate.”

He approached the corpse. Mrs. Thomas had flung her arms over it, and lay without motion. Meredith seized the cold hand of his brother.

“ I here,” cried he, “ solemnly pledge myself that the blood spilt by my unbridled rage shall not go unavenged ; and if I keep not my oath, may miseries, if possible more acute than those I now experience, be my lot for ever !”

He dropped the hand, and rushed wildly from the house, followed by Major Molyneux.

Lord Arrowsworth was too much absorbed in his own feelings to pay attention to any other circumstance ; but Hartlebury, though greatly shocked at the horrid scene, observed to the surgeon, that it would be proper to remove Mrs. Thomas from the body, in order to prepare it for interment : he approached for that purpose ;
he

he lifted the unfeigned mourner in his arms, and conveyed her to the adjoining apartment. She remained speechless, and survived her benefactor but three days.

CHAP. XII.

Die, forc'refs, die ! LEE.

WHEN Lord Arrowsworth had acquired sufficient composure, he returned to St. James's Square. His pallid and altered look alarmed his lady : fearing to shock her, or injure her health, he attempted to assume a cheerful air. In about two hours, a gentleman was announced on particular business, and Lady Arrowsworth retired ; but she was soon brought back by a violent ringing of the bell, and the voice of Creswell calling for assistance. On entering the room, she beheld his Lordship stretched on the floor, with an open letter lying by him. She shrieked loudly, and the servants appearing, by proper methods he was restored to life : but the shock was
more

more injurious to Lady Arrowsworth; she was taken ill, and conveyed to her bed, where, after a long and painful labor, she was delivered of a still-born male child.—The letter which had caused his Lordship's indisposition was that written by Forester, a few days previous to his death: it was found in his pocket, and sent, as directed, to Creswell, who dared not open or suppress the letter of another.

Hartlebury, in two days time, attended his unhappy young friend to the grave.—He was, by his particular wish (expressed in the paper he delivered when dying), buried at the feet of his mother. The funeral was private; pomp was avoided—but the tears shed were real.

The news of Forester's death was communicated to Sinclair Apsley by Hartlebury. The good youth was not ashamed to weep: he expressed his horror of duelling in the most forcible terms, and declared, that Forester had not left his equal behind him. It was deemed proper
to

to conceal the news from Cuthbert till his health was perfectly restored; and in a short time the whole family left London for the more peaceful scenes of Somersetshire.

Emily exulted in the success of her schemes, and appeared shortly as the professed mistress of Lord Winterfield, who left his neglected wife at Bath, where she hovered round the gaming-table, without the means of joining the votaries of fortune:—thus spectres are said to haunt the spot they most loved on earth.

But Meredith had formed a dark scheme; the laws, he knew, could not reach the murderers of his brother: he determined to supply their defect.

A month had elapsed since Forester had been consigned to the grave. Emily inhabited an elegant house in Wimpole Street. Her abode was well known, for she had lost all shame, and was become the fashionable demi-rep of the day.

Mere

Meredith was informed by his spies, that Lord Winterfield had left the house in his chariot, and that there did not appear to be any company. He immediately repaired to the spot, and, saying he wished to speak to Mrs. Meredith on particular business, was admitted to the drawing-room. The servant asked his name. Disconcerted at the question, he replied, in a hesitating manner, that he was a stranger, but had a particular message to deliver from Lord Winterfield, that could not brook delay. The servant retired.

The room was decorated with taste and magnificence. Festoons of artificial jasmine hung round the ceiling, and a large pier glass reflected the splendid scene. As he passed the mirror, Meredith started.

“Alas!” thought he, “how am I changed! Once a votary of dissipation, I thoughtlessly revelled in the gay walks of life; but now the dream is vanished, and I feel the folly of hasty opinion. Oh! I thought the world a scene of delight. I
thought

thought I could only tread where roses were strewed in my path : but now—— bitter reflection !”

A sudden step aroused him—it passed on, and he began to fear that Emily had learned his arrival, and avoided his presence ; but he was deceived, for, in a quarter of an hour, that seemed an age, Mrs. Meredith entered the room, gaily humming an Italian air.

She beheld him—faintly shrieked, and would have fled ; but he rushed to the door, double locked it, and put the key in his pocket.

He gazed at her in silence. She trembled, attempted to speak, but her voice was lost in murmurs. At length, unable to support his steady eye—

“ You are come,” said she, “ to upbraid me with my crimes.”

Meredith still was silent, and continued to gaze upon her.

“ You alarm me,” cried she : “ for Heaven’s sake speak ! tell me you hate—despise

despise—execrate me—do any thing but keep that horrible silence.”

“ Did you know that the murdered Forester was my brother ?” exclaimed Meredith, in a voice of thunder.

“ How ? is he then dead ?”

“ Wretched woman, you know he is, and a victim to your arts.”

“ And did he fall by your hand ?”

“ He did.”

“ Oh, joyful hearing !” cried she. “ I knew it well, but was resolved to have the confession from your own mouth. Meredith, I fear you not ; the laws cannot reach me ; and a single scream of mine will summon the servants to my aid. Yes, weak man, I *did* know that Forester was your brother ; but I knew it not till I had reason to hate him. I feared the milkiness of your nature ; I feared you would own him as a brother, and squander your fortune on the bastard brood of Mrs. Middlewich. Happy was it that I kept the secret : my prudence has enabled me to gratify my vengeance :

vengeance : you neglected, he outraged me. I armed one brother against the other : to me it was immaterial which fell ; and I now hail you—you, the *worthy, generous, feeling* Meredith, as a fratricide !”

“ I am so,” said Meredith ; “ yet I have one duty to fulfil : vengeance must be taken on the murderers, for I am not the only guilty person. I come here to do an act of justice.”

Emily trembled. “ I fear you not, Meredith—on my soul, I fear you not—the laws cannot reach me : you may, perhaps, expose me, but—I fear you not : do not imagine that I fear you.”

“ Behold these pistols ! This deadly weapon deprived a brother of life : his wronged spirit demands retribution. I have pledged myself to avenge his death, and I will keep my oath. Emily—prepare to die.”

The wretched woman stood petrified with horror : at length, she attempted to escape, but the door was fastened. Meredith seized her

her by the arm. "Move not : you vainly endeavour to escape. Dare not to call for aid, or that moment is your last."

She piteously gazed on him : her eyes flashed with the wildness of agony. At length she cried, while her voice was often interrupted by emotion, "Meredith—oh, Meredith—you will not—can you bear to—will you become the murderer of a woman, and your wife?"

"Both those titles have you forfeited. It were a vain task to attempt to disarm my justice. We quit not this room with life. Address yourself to Heaven, if you yet can hope for mercy there."

"I cannot—I cannot—I know not how; but spare me, Meredith—spare me : oh, I must not—I cannot die."

Meredith paced the room with emotion. "Sad is the necessity," said he; "but you have brought this ruin on your head : you have not a quarter of an hour's life."

"Hold, hold ! I will not hear it—oh, spare me—I am unfit to die—how shall I dare to——"

"Emily,

“ Emily, I have often heard you ridicule the idea of a future state of retribution : call, now, your philosophy to your assistance.—What ! does it fail of comfort, in your utmost need ? ”

“ Oh, talk not thus to me ; but if mercy yet inhabit your bosom, spare my life, and let my future conduct testify the sincerity of my penitence.”

“ I am fixed : you will not move me, Emily.”

“ If to drag out the wretched remainder of my days in want, in chains, in darkness, in never-ending penance, will atone for my crimes, such shall be my destiny ; but spare, spare my life.”

“ Prepare for death,” said Meredith, in a hurried manner ; “ I will no longer listen to you.”

Emily, loudly shrieking, rang the bell with violence : at the same moment——

* * * * *

When the door was burst open, what a sight presented itself to the astonished ser-

vants! They raised the bodies from the ground. Meredith was quite dead: the ball had entered his temple; but Emily discovered some faint signs of life. She was conveyed to her chamber: the wound was declared by the surgeons not to be mortal: but her lower jaw was broken; and when, after a long and painful illness, she was enabled to leave her bed, she presented a sight of deformity to her disgusted beholders. She left London, where she was become the object of universal execration, and retired to an old mansion-house in Cumberland, belonging to Lord Winterfield, who allowed her a yearly stipend of forty pounds, Meredith having left his property to a distant relation of his father by adoption.

4 DE 58

There she mourns the crimes that have reduced her from affluence to misery, and remains a terrible example to the world, of pride, cruelty, and guilt, having met their just reward.

THE END.

